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THE WORKS
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON

LITERARY CLUB EDITION FROM TYPE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XI

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RICHARD CUMBERLAND

Works

LIVES OF THE POETS AND OTHER PIECES

By SAMUEL JOHNSON

PAFRAETS BOOK COMPANY
TROY NEW YORK

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From old engraving

ELIZABETH CARTER
From a cameo — *Facing page* 96

JAMES MACPHERSON, Esqr. — *Facing page* 224

POPE

THE criticism upon Pope's epitaphs[a], which was printed in the Universal Visiter, is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inserted in the life.

Every art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety, than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall, therefore, endeavour, at this *visit*, to entertain the young students in poetry with an examination of Pope's epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is useless; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be composed in verse or prose. It is, indeed, commonly panegyrical; because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends; but it has no rule to restrain or modify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

I

On CHARLES, *earl of* DORSET, *in the church of Wythyham, in Sussex.*

Dorset, the grace of courts, the muse's pride,
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dy'd.
The scourge of pride, though sanctified or great,
Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state;
Yet soft in nature, though severe his lay,
His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.
Blest satirist! who touch'd the mean so true,
As show'd vice had his hate and pity too.

[a] See note, by Gifford, on Johnson's criticism here in Massinger's works.

> Blest courtier! who could king and country please,
> Yet sacred kept his friendship, and his ease.
> Blest peer! his great forefather's every grace
> Reflecting, and reflected on his race;
> Where other Buckhursts, other Dorsets shine,
> And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man for whom the tomb was erected, *died*. There are, indeed, some qualities worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by "judge of nature," is not easy to say. Nature is not the object of human judgment; for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant what is commonly called *nature* by the criticks, a just representation of things really existing, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed to *art;* nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of *art*.

> The scourge of pride—

Of this couplet, the second line is not, what is intended, an illustration of the former. *Pride* in the *great*, is, indeed, well enough connected with knaves in state, though *knaves* is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of *sanctified* pride will not lead the thoughts to *fops in learning*, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

> Yet soft his nature—

This is a high compliment, but was not first be-

stowed on Dorset by Pope[b]. The next verse is extremely beautiful.

Blest satirist!

In this distich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame these imitations with much harshness; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided; and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own; and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the muses his proper feather.

Blest courtier!

Whether a courtier can properly be commended for keeping his *ease sacred*, may, perhaps, be disputable. To please king and country, without sacrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would attend a little more accurately to the use of the word *sacred*, which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher being, or where some duty is exacted, or implied. A man may keep his friendship sacred, because promises of friendship are very

[b] Johnson, I imagine, alludes to a well-known line by Rochester:

The best good man with the worst-natur'd muse.

awful ties; but, methinks, he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease *sacred.*

> Blest peer!

The blessing ascribed to the *peer* has no connection with his peerage; they might happen to any other man whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity are likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer or of the man entombed.

II

On sir WILLIAM TRUMBULL, *one of the principal secretaries of state to king William the third, who, having resigned his place, died in his retirement at Easthamstead, in Berkshire,* 1716.

> A pleasing form; a firm, yet cautious mind;
> Sincere, though prudent; constant, yet resign'd;
> Honour unchang'd, a principle profest,
> Fix'd to one side, but mod'rate to the rest:
> An honest courtier, yet a patriot too;
> Just to his prince, and to his country true;
> Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
> A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
> A gen'rous faith, from superstition free;
> A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;
> Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,
> At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the first view, a fault which, I think, scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead; and to what purpose is any thing told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a

history of a nameless hero, are equally absurd, since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either are scattered at the mercy of fortune to be appropriated by guess. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them, and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject. He said, perhaps, the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an *honest courtier* and a *patriot;* for, an *honest courtier* cannot but be a *patriot.*

It was unsuitable to the nicety required in short compositions, to close his verse with the word *too:* every rhyme should be a word of emphasis; nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excusable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the seventh line the word *filled* is weak and prosaick, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

The thought in the last line is impertinent, having no connexion with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the

epitaph been written on the poor conspirator[c] who died lately in prison, after a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved against him, the sentiment had been just and pathetical; but why should Trumbull be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known restraint?

III

On the honourable SIMON HARCOURT, *only son of the lord chancellor* HARCOURT, *at the church of Stanton-Harcourt, in Oxfordshire,* 1720.

To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near,
Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear:
Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
Or gave his father grief but when he died.
How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!
If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.
Oh! let thy once-lov'd friend inscribe thy stone,
And with a father's sorrows mix his own!

This epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must concur with genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with servile imitation.

I cannot but wish that, of this inscription, the two last lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the sense.

[c] Major Bernardi, who died in Newgate, Sept. 20, 1736. See Gent. Mag. vol. I. p. 125. N.

POPE

IV

ON JAMES CRAGGS, ESQ.

In Westminster Abbey.

JACOBVS CRAGGS,
REGI MAGNAE BRITANNIAE A SECRETIS
ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS
PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPVLI AMOR ET DELICIAE
VIXIT TITVLIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR,
ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV.
OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear!
Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend;
Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd,
Prais'd, wept, and honour'd, by the muse he lov'd.

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and, therefore, some faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are torn from the poem that first contained them. We may, however, observe some defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet: it is superfluous to tell of him, who was *sincere*, *true*, and *faithful*, that he was *in honour clear*.

There seems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the relation between the two positions, that he *gained no title* and *lost no friend?*

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be used; for no reason can be given why part of the information should be

given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb, more than in any other place, or any other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs.

V

INTENDED FOR MR. ROWE

In Westminster Abbey[d].

Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
And, sacred, place by Dryden's awful dust;
Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,
To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.
Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest!
Blest in thy genius, in thy love, too, blest!
One grateful woman to thy fame supplies
What a whole thankless land to his denies.

Of this inscription the chief fault is, that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it is written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and, indeed, gives very little information concerning either.

To wish "Peace to thy shade," is too mythological to be admitted into a christian temple: the ancient worship has infected almost all our other compositions, and might, therefore, be contented to spare our epitaphs. Let fiction, at least, cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

[d] This was altered much for the better, as it now stands on the monument in the abbey, erected to Rowe and his daughter. WARB.
See Bowles's edition of Pope's works, ii. 416.

VI

ON MRS. CORBET

Who died of a cancer in her breast[e].

Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense:
No conquest she, but o'er herself, desir'd;
No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinc'd that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,
Heav'n, as its purest gold, by tortures try'd;
The saints sustain'd it, but the woman dy'd.

I have always considered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs; the subject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent peculiarities; yet that which really makes though not the splendour, the felicity of life, and that which every wise man will choose for his final and lasting companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs weary and disgusted from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of such a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay despise, it was fit that the value should be made known, and the dignity established. Domestick virtue, as it is exerted without great occasions, or conspicuous consequences, in an even unnoted tenour, required the genius of Pope to display it in such a manner as might attract regard, and enforce reverence. Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verses?

[e] In the north aisle of the parish church of St. Margaret, Westminster. H.

If the particular lines of this inscription be examined, it will appear less faulty than the rest. There is scarcely one line taken from commonplaces, unless it be that in which *only virtue* is said to be *our own*. I once heard a lady of great beauty and excellence object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyrick. Of this let the ladies judge.

VII

On the monument of the honourable ROBERT DIGBY, *and of his sister* MARY, *erected by their father the lord* DIGBY, *in the church of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire*, 1727.

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth:
Compos'd in suff'rings, and in joy sedate,
Good without noise, without pretension great.
Just of thy word, in ev'ry thought sincere,
Who knew no wish but what the world might hear:
Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:
Go, live! for heav'n's eternal year is thine;
Go, and exalt thy mortal to divine.
And thou, blest maid! attendant on his doom,
Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,
Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,
Not parted long, and now to part no more!
Go, then, where only bliss sincere is known!
Go, where to love and to enjoy are one!
Yet take these tears, mortality's relief,
And, till we share your joys, forgive our grief:
These little rites, a stone, a verse receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indiscriminate character, and of the sister tells nothing but that she died. The difficulty in writing

epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer; for, the greater part of mankind *have no character at all*, have little that distinguishes them from others equally good or bad, and, therefore, nothing can be said of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thousand more. It is, indeed, no great panegyrick, that there is inclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year, and died in another; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent, which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are, however, not the proper subjects of poetry; and whenever friendship, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The scantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs, which he has written, comprise about a hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought, or word, which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed from Dryden. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

VIII

ON SIR GODFREY KNELLER

In Westminster Abbey, 1723.

Kneller, by heav'n, and not a master, taught,
Whose art was nature, and whose pictures thought;
Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate
Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great,
Lies crown'd with princes' honours, poets' lays,
Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise.
Living, great nature fear'd he might outvie
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die.

Of this epitaph the first couplet is good, the second not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word *crowned* not being applicable to the *honours* or the *lays;* and the fourth is not only borrowed from the epitaph on Raphael, but of very harsh construction.

IX

ON GENERAL HENRY WITHERS

In Westminster Abbey, 1723.

Here, Withers, rest! thou bravest, gentlest mind,
Thy country's friend, but more of human kind.
O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd!
O! soft humanity in age belov'd!
For thee the hardy vet'ran drops a tear,
And the gay courtier feels the sigh sincere.
Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove
Thy martial spirit, or thy social love!
Amidst corruption, luxury and rage,
Still leaves some ancient virtues to our age:
Nor let us say (those English glories gone)
The last true Briton lies beneath this stone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of commonplaces, though somewhat diversified, by mingled qualities, and the peculiarity of a profession.

The second couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleasing; exclamation seldom succeeds in our language; and, I think, it may be observed, that the particle O! used at the beginning of a sentence, always offends.

The third couplet is more happy; the value expressed for him, by different sorts of men, raises him to esteem; there is yet something of the common cant of superficial satirists, who suppose that the insincerity of a courtier destroys all his sensations, and that he is equally a dissembler to the living and the dead[f].

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should be unwilling to lose the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if they cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

X

ON MR. ELIJAH FENTON

At Easthamstead, in Berkshire, 1730.

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, here lies an honest man:
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,
Whom heav'n kept sacred from the proud and great:
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life, and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;
From nature's temp'rate feast rose satisfy'd,
Thank'd heav'n that he liv'd, and that he dy'd.

[f] The thought was, probably, borrowed from Carew's Obsequies to the lady Anne Hay:

I heard the virgins sigh, I saw the sleek
And polish'd courtier channel his fresh cheek
With real tears. J. B.

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed from Crashaw. The four next lines contain a species of praise, peculiar, original, and just. Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and, whatever criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

XI

ON MR. GAY

In Westminster Abbey, 1732.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child;
With native humour temp'ring virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age;
Above temptation, in a low estate;
And uncorrupted e'en among the great:
A safe companion and an easy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end;
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies Gay!

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more successfully executed than the rest, for it will not always happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his

labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other; *gentle manners* and *mild affections*, if they mean any thing, must mean the same.

That Gay was a *man in wit* is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man, is not much for a poet. The *wit of a man*[g], and the *simplicity of a child*, make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet *rage* is less properly introduced after the mention of *mildness* and *gentleness* which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so *mild* and *gentle* to *temper* his *rage*, was not difficult.

The next line is inharmonious in its sound, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious, and the word *lash* used absolutely, and without any modification, is gross and improper.

To be *above temptation* in poverty, and *free from corruption among the great*, is, indeed, such a peculiarity as deserved notice. But to be a *safe companion* is praise merely negative, arising not from

[g] Her *wit* was more than *man*, her *innocence* a *child*.
DRYDEN, on Mrs. Killigrew.

the possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and one of the most odious.

As little can be added to his character, by asserting that he was *lamented in his end.* Every man that dies is, at least, by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented; and, therefore, this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The first eight lines have no grammer; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the *worthy* and the *good*, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh, when it is explained, that still fewer approve[h].

XII

INTENDED FOR SIR ISAAC NEWTON

In Westminster Abbey.

ISAACUS NEWTONIUS:

Quem immortalem
Testantur, *tempus*, *natura*, *cœlum:*
Mortalem
Hoc marmor fatetur.
Nature, and nature's laws, lay hid in night:
God said, *Let Newton be!* And all was light.

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults seem not to be very few. Why part should be Latin, and

[h] The same thought is found in George Whetstone's epitaph on the good lord Dyer, 1582:

Et semper bonus ille bonis fuit, ergo bonorum
Sunt illi demum pectora sarcophagus. J. B.

part English, it is not easy to discover. In the Latin the opposition of *immortalis* and *mortalis*, is a mere sound, or a mere quibble; he is not *immortal* in any sense contrary to that in which he is *mortal*.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

XIII

On Edmund *duke of* Buckingham, *who died in the nineteenth year of his age*, 1735.

If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
And ev'ry op'ning virtue blooming round,
Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,
Or add one patriot to a sinking state;
This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,
Or sadly told how many hopes lie here!
The living virtue now had shone approv'd,
The senate heard him, and his country lov'd.
Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame,
Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham:
In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art,
Ends in the milder merit of the heart:
And, chiefs or sages long to Britain giv'n,
Pays the last tribute of a saint to heav'n.

This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the rest; but I know not for what reason. To *crown* with *reflection* is surely a mode of speech approaching to nonsense. *Opening virtues blooming round*, is something like tautology; the six following lines are poor and prosaick. *Art* is, in another couplet, used for *arts*, that a rhyme may be had to *heart*. The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deserve the notice of criticism. The contemptible

Dialogue between He and She should have been suppressed for the author's sake.

In his last epitaph on himself, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he confounds the living man with the dead:

> Under this stone, or under this sill,
> Or under this turf, &c.

When a man is once buried, the question, under what he is buried, is easily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new; even this wretchedness seems to have been borrowed from the following tuneless lines:

> Ludovici Areosti humantur ossa
> Sub hoc marmore, vel sub hac humo, seu
> Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres,
> Sive hærede benignior comes, seu
> Opportunius incidens viator;
> Nam scire haud potuit futura, sed nec
> Tanti erat vacuum sibi cadaver
> Ut urnam cuperet parare vivens;
> Vivens ista tamen sibi paravit,
> Quæ inscribi voluit suo sepulchro
> Olim siquod haberet is sepulchrum.

Surely Ariosto did not venture to expect that his trifle would have ever had such an illustrious imitator.

PITT

CHRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I shall relate, more than has been already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born, in 1699, at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester college, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance, and, at his removal to New college, in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe.

This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is, indeed, culpable to load libraries with superfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superfluous, and, from this example, the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had resided at his college three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimpern, in Dorsetshire, 1722, by his relation, Mr. Pitt, of Stratfield Say, in Hampshire; and, resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became master of arts, 1724.

He probably about this time translated Vida's Art of Poetry, which Tristram's splendid edition

had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has, with great ardour, enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and, therefore, likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he passed the rest of his life, reverenced for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar he was, in a very high degree, cheerful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his Miscellany, published in 1727, it is not easy or necessary to know: those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his Vida animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the Æneid. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he, some time afterwards, added three or four more; with an advertisement, in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a prog-

ress of which himself was hardly conscious. This can hardly be true, and, if true, is nothing to the reader.

At last, without any farther contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete English Æneid, which I am sorry not to see joined in this publication with his other poems[1]. It would have been pleasing to have an opportunity of comparing the two best translations that, perhaps, were ever produced by one nation of the same author.

Pitt, engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally observed his failures, and avoided them; and, as he wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, equable, and splendid versification. With these advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errours. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and listless perusal; that Pitt pleases the criticks, and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred; for he left the

[1] It has since been added to the collection. R.

world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford, on which is this inscription:

In memory of
Chr. Pitt, clerk, M. A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the universal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
simplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent;
and died beloved,
Apr. 13, 1748,
aged 48.

THOMSON

JAMES THOMSON, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose name was Hume[j], inherited, as coheiress, a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was, probably, in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education, and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of Autumn; but was not considered by his master as superiour to common boys, though, in those early days, he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which, however, he so little pleased himself, that, on every new-year's day, he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From the school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raised, upon her little estate, what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with

[j] According to the Biographical Dictionary the name of Thomson's mother was Beatrix Trotter. Hume was the name of his grandmother. Ed.

her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The design of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at Edinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till, at the usual time, he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the professor of divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience; and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane[k].

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated, with new diligence, his blossoms of poetry, which, however, were in some danger of a blast; for, submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he heard of nothing but faults; but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to sink into despondence.

He easily discovered, that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance, or assistance, which, at last, he never received;

[k] See the Life of Beattie, by sir William Forbes, for some additional anecdotes. Ed.

however, he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek, in London, patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a newcomer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his necessities, his whole fund was his Winter, which for a time could find no purchaser; till, at last, Mr. Millan was persuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had, for some time, reason to regret[1]; but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained, likewise, the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neg-

[1] Warton was told by Millan that the book lay a long time unsold on his stall. Ed.

lect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, if he desired that I should wait on him: he returned, he did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory letter to him. He received me in what they commonly called a civil manner; asked me some commonplace questions; and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own that the present was larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

The poem, which, being of a new kind[m], few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the publick; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his

[m] "It was at this time that the school of Pope was giving way: addresses to the head rather than to the heart, or the fancy; moral axioms and witty observations, expressed in harmonious numbers, and with epigrammatick terseness; the *limæ labor*, all the artifices of a highly polished style, and the graces of finished composition, which had long usurped the place of the more sterling beauties of the imagination and sentiment, began first to be lessened in the public estimation by the appearance of Thomson's Seasons, a work which constituted a new era in our poetry."
Censura Literaria, iv. 280.

acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the lord chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet, (then Malloch,) and Mira, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to Winter and the other seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the collected works, the reader may inquire.

The next year, 1727, he distinguished himself by three publications; of Summer, in pursuance of his plan; of a Poem on the Death of sir Isaac Newton, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr. Gray; and of Britannia, a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had, therefore, no favour to expect from the court.

Thomson, having been some time entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his Summer; but the same kindness which had first disposed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuse the dedication, which was, by his advice, addressed to Mr. Dodington, a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was published next year, with a dedication to the countess of Hertford; whose practice it was

to invite every summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses, and assist her studies. This honour was one summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with lord Hertford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and, therefore, never received another summons.

Autumn, the season to which the Spring and Summer are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published, 1730, his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of Sophonisba, which raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the publick. It was observed, however, that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is a feeble line in the play:

> O, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!

This gave occasion to a waggish parody:

> O, Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!

which for awhile was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the prologue to Sophonisba, the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it; and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may, therefore, now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expense; and might expect, when he returned home, a certain establishment.

At this time a long course of opposition to sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon liberty.

While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of secretary of the briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it as his noblest work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. Liberty called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises and reward her encomiast: her praises were condemned to harbour

spiders, and to gather dust; none of Thomson's performances were so little regarded.

The judgment of the publick was not erroneous; the recurrence of the same images must tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning superfluous, must quickly grow disgusting.

The poem of Liberty does not now appear in its original state; but, when the author's works were collected after his death, was shortened by sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty, which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend. I wish to see it exhibited as its author left it.

Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems, for awhile, to have suspended his poetry; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the chancellor, for his place then became vacant[n];

[n]An interesting anecdote respecting Thomson's deportment before a commission, instituted in 1732, for an inquiry into the state of the public offices under the lord chancellor, is omitted by Johnson and all the poet's biographers. We extract it from the nineteenth volume of the Critical Review, p. 141. "Mr. Thomson's place of secretary of the briefs fell under the cognizance of this commission; and he was summoned to attend it, which he accordingly did, and made a speech, explaining the nature, duty, and income of his place, in terms that, though very concise, were so perspicuous and elegant, that lord chancellor Talbot, who was present, publicly said he preferred that single speech to the best of his poetical compositions." The above praise is precisely such as we might anticipate that an old lawyer would give, but it, at all events, exempts the poet's character from the imputation of listless indolence, advanced by Murdoch, and leaves lord Hardwicke little excuse for *his* conduct. Ed.

and though the lord Hardwicke delayed, for some time, to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness, or pride, or some other motive, perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from soliciting; and the new chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and, by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton, professed himself the patron of wit: to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said, "that they were in a more poetical posture than formerly;" and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced, 1738°, the tragedy of Agamemnon, which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery,

°It is not generally known that in this year an edition of Milton's Areopagitica was published by Millar, to which Thomson wrote a preface.

he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to silence. Pope countenanced Agamemnon, by coming to it the first night, and was welcomed to the theatre by a general clap; he had much regard for Thomson, and once expressed it in a poetical epistle sent to Italy, of which, however, he abated the value, by transplanting some of the lines into his epistle to Arbuthnot.

About this time the act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of Gustavus Vasa[p], a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the publick recompensed by a very liberal subscription; the next was the refusal of Edward and Eleonora, offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson, likewise, endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the publick murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that "he had taken a *liberty* which was not agreeable to *Britannia* in any *season*."

He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the mask of Alfred, which was acted before the prince at Cliefden-house.

His next work, 1745, was Tancred and Sigismunda, the most successful of all his tragedies; for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. It may be

[p] See vol. xii, p. 279, of this edition, and Mr. Roscoe's Life of Pope, for some anecdotes respecting Gay's Beggars' Opera and Polly, illustrative of the efficacy of a lord-chamberlain's interference with the stage. Ed.

doubted whether he was, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the pathetick; and his diffusive and descriptive style produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttleton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the Castle of Indolence, which was many years under his hand, but was, at last, finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a disorder, which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inscription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Thomson was of stature above the middle size, and "more fat than bard beseems," of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but cheerful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved[q].

[q] Several anecdotes of Thomson's personal appearance and habits are scattered over the volumes of Boswell. Ed.

He left behind him the tragedy of Coriolanus, which was, by the zeal of his patron, sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the stage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond intimacy, spoke in such a manner as showed him "to be," on that occasion, "no actor." The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation. By this tragedy a considerable sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his sisters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by the following letter, which I communicate with much pleasure, as it gives me, at once, an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, and reflecting on the friendly assistance of Mr. Boswell, from whom I received it.

"Hagley in Worcestershire, Oct. 4th, 1747.

"My dear Sister,—I thought you had known me better than to interpret my silence into a decay of affection, especially as your behaviour has always been such as rather to increase than diminish it. Don't imagine, because I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother.

I must do myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are naturally very fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of complaint against you, (of which, by the by, I have not the least shadow,) I am conscious of so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little charitable and forgiving.

"It gives me the truest heartfelt satisfaction to hear you have a good, kind husband, and are in easy, contented circumstances; but were they otherwise, that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness towards you. As our good and tenderhearted parents did not live to receive any material testimonies of that highest human gratitude I owed them, (than which nothing could have given me equal pleasure,) the only return I can make them now is by my kindness to those they left behind them. Would to God poor Lizy had lived longer, to have been a further witness of the truth of what I say, and that I might have had the pleasure of seeing once more a sister who so truly deserved my esteem and love! But she is happy, while we must toil a little longer here below: let us, however, do it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of life will not, perhaps, be inconsistent with that blissful state. You did right to call your daughter by her name; for you must needs have had a particular tender friendship for one another, endeared as you were by nature, by having passed the affectionate years of your youth together; and by that great softener and

engager of hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in my power to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquisite pleasures of my life. But enough of this melancholy, though not unpleasing strain.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see by my letter to him: as I approve entirely of his marrying again, you may readily ask me why I don't marry at all. My circumstances have, hitherto, been so variable and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce to keep me from engaging in such a state: and now, though they are more settled, and of late (which you will be glad to hear) considerably improved, I begin to think myself too far advanced in life for such youthful undertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons that are apt to startle the delicacy of difficult old bachelors. I am, however, not a little suspicious that, was I to pay a visit to Scotland, (which I have some thoughts of doing soon,) I might, possibly, be tempted to think of a thing not easily repaired if done amiss. I have always been of opinion that none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more forsaken than they, while the gentlemen are continually running abroad all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return for a wife. You see I am beginning to make interest already with the Scots ladies. But no more of this infectious subject. Pray let me hear from you now and then; and though I am not a regular correspondent, yet, perhaps, I may

mend in that respect. Remember me kindly to your husband, and believe me to be

"Your most affectionate brother

"JAMES THOMSON."

(Addressed) "To Mrs. Thomson, in Lanark."

The benevolence of Thomson was fervid, but not active: he would give, on all occasions, what assistance his purse would supply; but the offices of intervention or solicitation he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniencies of idleness, but he never cured it; and was so conscious of his own character, that he talked of writing an eastern tale of the Man who loved to be in Distress.

Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition. He was once reading to Dodington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hand, and told him that he did not understand his own verses.

The biographer of Thomson has remarked, that an author's life is best read in his works: his observation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomson, once told me, he heard a lady remarking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was "a great lover, a great swimmer, and rigorously abstinent;" but, said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was, perhaps, never in cold water in his life;

and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage always spoke with the most eager praise of his social qualities, his warmth and constancy of friendship, and his adherence to his first acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind: his mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which nature bestows only on a poet; the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast, and attends to the minute. The reader of the Seasons wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shows him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses.

His is one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used. Thomson's wide expansion of general views, and his enumeration of circumstantial varieties, would have been obstructed and embarrassed by the frequent intersection of the sense, which are the necessary effects of rhyme.

His descriptions of extended scenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of

nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of spring, the splendour of summer, the tranquillity of autumn, and the horrour of winter, take, in their turns, possession of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are successively varied by the vicissitudes of the year, and imparts to us so much of his own enthusiasm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without his part in the entertainment; for he is assisted to recollect and to combine, to arrange his discoveries, and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the Seasons is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances subsisting all at once, no rule can be given why one should be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense or expectation.

His diction is in the highest degree florid and luxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts, "both their lustre and their shade:" such as invest them with splendour, through which, perhaps, they are not always easily discerned. It is too exuberant, and sometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

These poems, with which I was acquainted at their first appearance, I have since found altered and enlarged by subsequent revisals[r], as the author sup-

[r] For an interesting collection of the various readings of the successive editions of the Seasons, see vols. ii. iii. and iv. of the Censura Literaria.

posed his judgment to grow more exact, and as books or conversation extended his knowledge and opened his prospects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not lost part of what Temple calls their "race;" a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive sense, means the flavour of the soil.

Liberty, when it first appeared, I tried to read, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and, therefore, will not hazard either praise or censure.

The highest praise which he has received ought not to be suppressed; it is said by lord Lyttelton, in the prologue to his posthumous play, that his works contained

No line which, dying, he could wish to blot.

Thompson's own preface to the second edition of Winter may be found in vol. ii. p. 67, of the above quoted work. Ed.

WATTS

THE poems of Dr. Watts were, by my recommendation, inserted in the late collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

Isaac Watts was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the same name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a shoemaker. He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorn, a clergyman, master of the free-school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the university; but he declared his resolution of taking his lot with the dissenters. Such he was as every christian church would rejoice to have adopted.

He, therefore, repaired, in 1690, to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Horte, afterwards archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, show a degree of knowl-

edge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from fifteen to fifty, and, in his youth, appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the *glyconick* measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules, as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though, perhaps, not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour, as shows that he was but a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature, and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by sir John Hartopp five years, as domestick tutor to his son: and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the holy scriptures; and, being chosen assistant to Dr.

Chauncey, preached the first time on the birthday that completed his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of a second nativity, by which he entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncey; but, soo after his entrance on his charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually; and he performed his duty till, 1712, he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that from the feebleness which it brought upon him he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbon's representation; to which regard is to be paid, as to the narrative of one who writes

what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.

"Our next observation shall be made upon that remarkably kind providence which brought the doctor into sir Thomas Abney's family, and continued him there till his death, a period of no less than thirty-six years. In the midst of his sacred labours for the glory of God, and good of his generation, he is seized with a most violent and threatening fever, which leaves him oppressed with great weakness, and puts a stop, at least, to his publick services for four years. In this distressing season, doubly so to his active and pious spirit, he is invited to sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever removes from it till he had finished his days. Here he enjoyed the uninterrupted demonstrations of the truest friendship. Here, without any care of his own, he had every thing which could contribute to the enjoyment of life, and favour the unwearied pursuits of his studies. Here he dwelt in a family, which for piety, order, harmony, and every virtue, was an house of God. Here he had the privilege of a country recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and other advantages, to soothe his mind, and aid his restoration to health; to yield him, whenever he chose them, most grateful intervals from his laborious studies, and enable him to return to them with redoubled vigour and delight. Had it not been for this most happy event, he might, as to outward view, have feebly, it may be painfully, dragged on through many more years of languor,

and inability for publick service, and even for profitable study, or, perhaps, might have sunk into his grave under the overwhelming load of infirmities in the midst of his days; and thus the church and world would have been deprived of those many excellent sermons and works, which he drew up and published during his long residence in this family. In a few years after his coming hither, sir Thomas Abney dies; but his amiable consort survives, who shows the doctor the same respect and friendship as before, and most happily for him and great numbers besides; for, as her riches were great, her generosity and munificence were in full proportion; her thread of life was drawn out to a great age, even beyond that of the doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through her kindness, and that of her daughter, the present Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, who in a like degree esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into this family, till his days were numbered and finished; and, like a shock of corn in its season, he ascended into the regions of perfect and immortal life and joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six-and-thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number and their variety

show the intenseness of his industry, and the extent of his capacity.

He was one of the first authors that taught the dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness, and inelegance of style. He showed them, that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation; and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster had gained by his proper delivery, to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferiour to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his cursory sermons, but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper impression.

To stated and publick instruction he added familiar visits, and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of resentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tenderness appeared in his attention to children and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue, though the whole was not a hundred a year; and for children he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason, through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer, who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is, perhaps, the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire his meekness of opposition, and his mildness of cen-

sure. It was not only in his book, but in his mind, that orthodoxy was united with charity.

Of his philosophical pieces, his Logick has been received into the universities, and, therefore, wants no private recommendation; if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man, who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *space* with that of *empty space*, and did not consider, that though space might be without matter, yet matter, being extended, could not be without space.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his Improvement of the Mind, of which the radical principles may, indeed, be found in Locke's Conduct of the Understanding; but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work, in the highest degree, useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatises of theology as distinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works: under his direction it may be truly said, "theologiæ philosophia ancillatur," philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction: it is difficult

to read a page without learning, or at least wishing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is, on a sudden, compelled to pray.

It was, therefore, with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unsolicited diploma, by which he became a doctor of divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example: till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and, being no longer capable of publick duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired, Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars.

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments, rather

than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet, perhaps, there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination, as the Dacian Battle proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to be supplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topicks enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a man of letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there

that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of sprightliness and vigour? He is, at least, one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed, by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in all but his nonconformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

AMBROSE PHILIPS

OF the birth, or early part of the life, of Ambrose Philips, I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's college, in Cambridge[s], where he first solicited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the collection, published by the university, on the death of queen Mary.

From this time, how he was employed, or in what station he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have published his Pastorals before the year 1708, because they are, evidently, prior to those of Pope.

He afterwards, 1709, addressed to the universal patron, the duke of Dorset, a poetical Letter from Copenhagen, which was published in the Tatler, and is, by Pope, in one of his first letters, mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man "who could write very nobly."

Philips was a zealous whig, and, therefore, easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; since he was reduced to translate the Persian Tales for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which, if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean sound.

[s] He took his degrees, A. B. 1696, A. M. 1700.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams. The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or vigour[t].

In 1712, he brought upon the stage the Distrest Mother, almost a translation of Racine's Andromaque. Such a work requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play, a whole Spectator, none, indeed, of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it yet continued to be acted, another Spectator was written, to tell what impression it made upon sir Roger; and, on the first night, a select audience, says Pope[u], was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the most successful epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but, whenever it is recalled to the stage, where, by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of epilogues in general, and, conse-

[t] This ought to have been noticed before. It was published in 1700, when he appears to have obtained a fellowship of St. John's.

[u] Spence.

quently, of this, was questioned by a correspondent of the Spectator, whose letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered, in the defence, that Prior's epilogue to Phædra had a little excited jealousy; and something of Prior's plan may be discovered in the performance of his rival. Of this distinguished epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate[v] "the man who calls me cousin;" and when he was asked, how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, "the epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first." It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it, and that, when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the solicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his translations from Sappho had been published in the Spectator; he was an important and distinguished associate of clubs, witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice

[v] Spence.

from the publick, was his Six Pastorals, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as a pleasing amusement, had they not been, unhappily, too much commended.

The rustick poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose eclogues seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for, no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was soon discovered, that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for images and descriptions, satyrs and fawns, and naiads and dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety of matter, which, having a natural power to sooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *eclogue* of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and, therefore, called his own productions *æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted

by subsequent writers, and, amongst others, by our Spenser.

More than a century afterwards, 1498, Mantuan published his Bucolicks with such success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far, and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferiour schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, to censure the corruptions of the church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topicks of controversy.

The Italians soon transferred pastoral poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote Arcadia in prose and verse: Tasso and Guarini wrote Favole Boschareccie, or sylvan dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with Thyrsis and Damon, and Thestylis and Phyllis.

Philips thinks it somewhat strange to conceive "how, in an age so addicted to the muses, pastoral poetry never comes to be so much as thought upon." His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never, from the time of Spenser, wanted writers to talk occasionally of Arcadia and Strephon; and half the book, in which he first tried his powers, consists of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between Tityrus and Corydon, or Mopsus and Me-

nalcas. A series or book of pastorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not long afterwards, Pope made the first display of his powers in four pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The Guardian gave an account of pastoral, partly critical, and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry; and the pipe of the pastoral muse is transmitted, by lawful inheritance, from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he, therefore, drew a comparison of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandizing himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published, however, it was, (Guardian, 40,) and from that time Pope

and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addison's approbation, as disaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not satisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to grosser insults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chastise Pope, who appears to have been extremely exasperated; for, in the first edition of his letters, he calls Philips "rascal," and in the last still charges him with detaining, in his hands, the subscriptions for Homer, delivered to him by the Hanover club.

I suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with sufficient meanness, the gratification of him by whose prosperity he was pained.

Men sometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands, which the first breath of contradiction blasted.

When upon the succession of the house of Hanover every whig expected to be happy, Philips seems to have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden shower, though he did not omit

what flattery could perform. He was only made a commissioner of the lottery, 1717, and, what did not much elevate his character, a justice of the peace.

The success of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes towards the stage: he did not, however, soon commit himself to the mercy of an audience, but contented himself with the fame already acquired, till after nine years he produced, 1722, the Briton, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, between Vanoc, the British prince, and Valens, the Roman general, is confessed to be written with great dramatick skill, animated by spirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been silent: for he exhibited another tragedy the same year, on the story of Humphry, duke of Gloucester. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happiest undertaking was of a paper, called the Freethinker, in conjunction with associates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made, first, bishop of Bristol, and, afterwards, primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may easily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is

little read; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal essays; but he knew how to practise the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclesiastical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be slenderly supported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and, making him his secretary[w], added such preferments, as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish parliament.

In December, 1726, he was made secretary to the lord chancellor; and in August, 1733, became judge of the prerogative court.

After the death of his patron he continued some years in Ireland; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned, 1748, to London, having, doubtless, survived most of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagonist, Pope. He found, however, the duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems, collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him; he was struck with a palsy, and died June 18, 1749, in his seventy-eighth year[x].

[w] The archbishop's letters, published in 1769, (the originals of which are now in Christ-church library, Oxford,) were collected by Mr. Philips.

[x] At his house in Hanover-street, and was buried in Audley chapel.

Of his personal character, all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at table, when I asked him, how came thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say 'I'm goaded on by love?' After which question he never spoke again[y]."

Of the Distrest Mother, not much is pretended to be his own, and, therefore, it is no subject of criticism: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity nor above it. Among the poems comprised in the late collection, the Letter from Denmark may be justly praised; the Pastorals, which, by the writer of the Guardian, were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustick muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected: the supposition of such a state is allowed to pastoral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines sometimes elegant; but he has seldom much force, or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which from Pope and Pope's adherents procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems

[y] Mr. Ing's eminence does not seem to have been derived from his wit. That the *men* who drive oxen are *goaded*, seems to be a custom peculiar to Staffordshire. J. B.

of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole, "the steerer of the realm," to Miss Pulteney in the nursery. The numbers are smooth and sprightly, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet, if they had been written by Addison, they would have had admirers: little things are not valued but when they are done by those who can do greater.

In his translations from Pindar, he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet, at least, half his book deserves to be read: perhaps he valued most himself that part which the critick would reject.

WEST

GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a sufficient account; the intelligence which my inquiries have obtained is general and scanty.

He was the son of the reverend Dr. West; perhaps[z] him who published Pindar, at Oxford, about the beginning of this century. His mother was sister to sir Richard Temple, afterwards lord Cobham. His father, purposing to educate him for the church, sent him first to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was seduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commission in a troop of horse, procured him by his uncle.

He continued some time in the army; though it it reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere soldier, nor ever lost the love, or much neglected the pursuit, of learning; and, afterwards, finding himself more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination, May, 1729, to be clerk extraordinary of the privy council, which produced no immediate profit; for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession, and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and settled himself in a very pleasant house at Wickham, in Kent,

[z] Certainly him. It was published in 1697.

where he devoted himself to learning and to piety. Of his learning, the late collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller, if the dissertations which accompany his version of Pindar had not been improperly omitted. Of his piety, the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his Observations on the Resurrection, published in 1747, for which the university of Oxford created him a doctor of laws by diploma, March 30, 1748, and would, doubtless, have reached yet further, had he lived to complete what he had for some time meditated, the Evidences of the Truth of the New Testament. Perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read the prayers of the publick liturgy every morning to his family, and that on Sunday evening he called his servants into the parlour, and read to them first a sermon, and then prayers. Crashaw is now not the only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of poet and saint.

He was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham, Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his Dissertation on St. Paul.

These two illustrious friends had for a while listened to the blandishments of infidelity; and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expecta-

tion of new objections against christianity; and as infidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a methodist.

Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the privy council, 1752: and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed; nor could it secure him from the calamities of life: he lost, 1755, his only son; and the year after, March 26, a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrours.

Of his translations, I have only compared the first Olympick Ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas: for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of versification. The first strophe is eminently happy: in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, "if thou, my soul, wishest to speak of games, look not in the desert sky for a planet hotter than the sun; nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia." He is sometimes too paraphras-

tical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, signifies "delighting in horses;" a word which, in the translation, generates these lines:

> Hiero's royal brows, whose care
> Tends the courser's noble breed,
> Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
> Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.

Pindar says of Pelops, that "he came alone in the dark to the White Sea;" and West,

> Near the billow-beaten side
> Of the foam-besilver'd main,
> Darkling, and alone, he stood:

which, however, is less exuberant than the former passage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His Institution of the Garter, 1742, is written with sufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserve the reader from weariness.

His Imitations of Spenser are very successfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements together. But such compositions are not to be reckoned among the great achievements of intellect,

because their effect is local and temporary; they appeal not to reason or passion, but to memory, and presuppose an accidental or artificial state of mind. An imitation of Spenser is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenser has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation; but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is coextended with rational nature, or, at least, with the whole circle of polished life; what is less than this can be only pretty, the plaything of fashion, and the amusement of a day.

There is, in the Adventurer, a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr. West's, and supposed to have been written by him. It should not be concealed, however, that it is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Dodsley's collection, and is mentioned as his in a letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author; and Hawkesworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the publick.

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COLLINS

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester, on the 25th of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was, in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester college, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the publick by some verses to a Lady Weeping, published in the Gentleman's Magazine.

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New college, but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a commoner of Queen's college, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was, in about half a year, elected a demy of Magdalen college, where he continued till he had taken a bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the university; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now, about 1744, came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution; or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote inquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him

speak with great kindness of Leo the tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successour. But probably not a page of the history was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He showed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study* than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities, disease and insanity.

Having formerly written his character[a], while,

[a]In the Poetical Calendar, a collection of poems by Fawkes and Woty, in several volumes, 1763, &c.

perhaps, it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of elysian gardens.

"This was, however, the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by him, but not always attained. Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced, in happier moments, sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery, and, perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want, by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will, at last, relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was, for some time, confined in a house of lunaticks, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death, in 1756, came to his relief[b].

[b] A monument of exquisite workmanship, by Flaxman, is erected in Chichester to Collins's memory.

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English testament, such as children carry to the school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity, to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that is the best.'"

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends, Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatick manners, and called them his Irish Eclogues. He showed them, at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr. John Hume, on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superiour to his other works, but which no search has yet found[c].

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

[c] It is printed in the late collection.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief, with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burdensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants.

As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may, sometimes, extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr. Collins's first production is added here from the Poetical Calendar.

TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING

Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn;
  Lament not Hannah's happy state;
You may be happy in your turn,
  And seize the treasure you regret.

With love united hymen stands,
  And softly whispers to your charms,
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
  You'll find your sister in his arms."

DYER

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own letters, published with Hughes's correspondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer, of Aberglasney, in Caermarthenshire, a solicitor of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster school under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law; but having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied awhile under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales, and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting, and, about 1727, printed Grongar Hill in Lewis's Miscellany.

Being, probably, unsatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published the Ruins of Rome.

If his poem was written soon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions in painting, whatever they might be; for decline of health and love of study determined him to the church.

He, therefore, entered into orders; and, it seems, married, about the same time, a lady of the name of "Ensor, whose grandmother," says he, "was a Shakespeare, descended from a brother of every body's Shakespeare;" by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclesiastical provision was, for a long time, but slender. His first patron, Mr. Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp, in Leicestershire, of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford, in Lincolnshire, of seventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1751, sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and forty pounds a year; and, in 1755, the chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expenses, took away the profit. In 1757 he published the Fleece, his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodsley, the bookseller, was one day mentioning it to a critical visitor, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, "He will," said the critick, "be buried in woolen."

He did not, indeed, long survive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments; for in 1758 (July 24th,) he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. Grongar Hill is the happiest of his productions: it is not, indeed, very

accurately written; but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise are so welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer so consonant to the general sense or experience of mankind, that when it is once read, it will be read again.

The idea of the Ruins of Rome strikes more but pleases less, and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some passages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating edifices, he says,

> The pilgrim oft
> At dead of night, mid his orison hears
> Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
> Tumbling all precip'tate down, dash'd,
> Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.

Of the Fleece, which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl.* When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery, and incidental digressions, by clothing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an

unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

Let me, however, honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told, that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's Fleece; for if that were ill-received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence."

SHENSTONE

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the son of Thomas Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November, 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen, one of those insulated districts which, in the division of the kingdom, was appended, for some reason, not now discoverable, to a distant county; and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though, perhaps, thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the Schoolmistress has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for fresh entertainment, and expected that, when any of the family went to market, a new book should be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that, when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for awhile to the grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent schoolmaster at Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress.

When he was young, June, 1724, he was deprived of his father, and soon after, August, 1726, of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent, in 1732, to Pembroke college, in Oxford, a society which, for half a century, has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name in the book ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the civilian's gown, but without showing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr. Dolman, of Broome, in Staffordshire, whose attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and, in 1737, published a small miscellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about to acquaint himself with life, and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of publick resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published, in 1741, his Judgment of Hercules, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election: this was next year followed by the Schoolmistress.

Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it awhile, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole es-

tate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty, than the increase of its produce.

Now was excited his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began, from this time, to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, and to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden; demands any great powers of mind, I will not inquire: perhaps a surly and sullen speculator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed, by the most supercilious observer, to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the *petty state* that *appeared behind it*. For awhile the inhabitants of Hagley affected to

tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when, by degrees, the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity; and where there is vanity there will be folly[d].

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye: he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks, he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but could spare no money for its reparation.

In time his expenses brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very

[d] This charge against the Lyttelton family has been denied, with some degree of warmth, by Mr. Potter, and since by Mr. Graves. The latter says, "The truth of the case, I believe, was, that the Lyttelton family went so frequently with their family to the Leasowes, that they were unwilling to break in upon Mr. Shenstone's retirement on every occasion, and, therefore, often went to the principal points of view without waiting for any one to conduct them regularly through the whole walks. Of this Mr. Shenstone would sometimes peevishly complain; though, I am persuaded, he never really suspected any ill-natured intention in his worthy and much-valued neighbours." R.

different from fawns and fairies[e]. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing[f]. It is said, that if he had lived a little longer, he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leasowes, of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the side of his brother in the church-yard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his Pastoral Ballad was addressed. He is represented, by his friend Dodsley, as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence: but, if once offended, not easily appeased; inattentive to economy, and careless of his expenses; in his person he was larger than the middle size, with

[e] Mr. Graves, however, expresses his belief that this is a groundless surmise. "Mr. Shenstone," he adds, "was too much respected in the neighbourhood to be treated with rudeness; and though his works, (frugally as they were managed) added to his manner of living, must necessarily have made him exceed his income, and, of course, he might sometimes be distressed for money, yet he had too much spirit to expose himself to insults from trifling sums, and guarded against any great distress, by anticipating a few hundreds; which his estate could very well bear, as appeared by what remained to his executors after the payment of his debts, and his legacies to his friends, and annuities of thirty pounds a year to one servant, and six pounds to another, for his will was dictated with equal justice and generosity. R.

[f] We may, however, say with the Grecian orator, *ὅτι ἀπολλύμενος εὐῳραίνει*, he gives forth a fragrance as he wastes away. Ed.

something clumsy in his form; very negligent of his clothes, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner; for he held that the fashion was no rule of dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form[g].

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime; the Elegy on Jesse, which has been supposed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Miss Godfrey, in Richardson's Pamela.

What Gray thought of his character, from the perusal of his letters, was this:

"I have read, too, an octavo volume of Shenstone's letters. Poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned, but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see and commend it; his correspondence is about nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neighbouring clergymen, who wrote verses too."

His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humorous sallies, and moral pieces.

g "These," says Mr. Graves, "were not precisely his sentiments, though he thought, right enough, that every one should, in some degree, consult his particular shape and complexion in adjusting his dress; and that no fashion ought to sanctify what was ungraceful, absurd, or really deformed."

His conception of an elegy he has in his preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and, therefore, superiour to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topicks of praise are the domestick virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the essence is uniformity will be soon described. His elegies have, therefore, too much resemblance of each other.

The lines are, sometimes, such as elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant; his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected: his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen; and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

The lyrick poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, Rural Elegance has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and, though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosphical argument and poetical spirit.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent: the Skylark pleases me best, which has, however, more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his Pastoral Ballad demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral: an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to show the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanza seems to have been chosen in imitation of Rowe's Despairing Shepherd.

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature:

I priz'd ev'ry hour that went by,
  Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are past, and I sigh,
  And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forego,
  What anguish I felt in my heart!
Yet I thought (but it might not be so)
  'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I slowly withdrew;
  My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
  I thought that she bade me return.

In the second, this passage has its prettiness, thought it be not equal to the former:

I have found out a gift for my fair;
  I have found where the woodpigeons breed;
But let me that plunder forbear,
  She will say 'twas a barbarous deed:

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,
  Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
  Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

In the third, he mentions the commonplaces of amorous poetry with some address:

'Tis his with mock passion to glow!
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold,
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold;

How the nightingales labour the strain,
With the notes of his charmer to vie;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs and die.

In the fourth, I find nothing better than this natural strain of hope:

Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes,
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose?

Yet time may diminish the pain:
The flow'r, and the shrub, and the tree,
Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me.

His Levities are, by their title, exempted from the severities of criticism; yet it may be remarked, in a few words, that his humour is sometimes gross, and seldom sprightly.

Of the moral poems, the first is the Choice of Hercules, from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts just; but something of vigour is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His Fate of Delicacy has an air of gaiety, but not a very pointed general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may, probably, find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. Love and Honour

is derived from the old ballad, "Did you not hear of a Spanish Lady?"—I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The Schoolmistress, of which I know not what claim it has to stand among the mortal works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular style, in light and short compositions, contributes much to the increase of pleasure: we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the style, and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable[h].

[h] Mr. D'Israeli's remarks on Shenstone and his writings, may be profitably compared with Johnson's life. See last edition of the Curiosities of Literature. Ed.

YOUNG

THE following life was written, at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the publick will, perhaps, wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him[1].

"DEAR SIR,—In consequence of our different conversations about authentick materials for the life of Young, I send you the following detail.

"Of great men, something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the illustrious author of the Night Thoughts much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that, of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured."

Edward Young was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June, 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time fellow of Winchester college, and rector of Upham; who was the son of Jo. Young, of Woodhay, in Berkshire, styled by Wood, *gentleman*. In September, 1682, the poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. When Ward's faculties were impaired through age, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that at a visitation of Sprat's, July the 12th, 1686, the prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the bishop

[1] See Gent. Mag. vol. lxx. p. 225. N.

was so pleased, that he told the chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. Some time after this, in consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of lord Bradford, to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons, he was appointed chaplain to king William and queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says, "he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late queen, who honoured him by standing godmother to the poet." His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of a gentleman of the name of Harris, who married his only daughter. The dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the sixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his decease, bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his sermon with saying, "Death has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us, and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroke; so that he, whom you saw a week ago distributing the holy mysteries, is now laid in the dust. But he still lives in the many excellent directions he has left us, both how to live and how to die."

The dean placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester college, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birthday, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to dis-

cover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford afforded them an opportunity to bestow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an Oxford fellowship our poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New college cannot claim the honour of numbering among its fellows him who wrote the Night Thoughts.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an independent member of New college, that he might live at little expense in the warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All Souls. In a few months the warden of New college died. He then removed to Corpus college. The president of this society, from regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expenses. In 1708, he was nominated to a law-fellowship at All Souls by archbishop Tenison, into whose hands it came by devolution. Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the son. The manner in which it was exerted, seems to prove that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23rd of April, 1714, Young took his degree of bachelor of civil laws, and his doctor's degree on the 10th of June, 1719.

Soon after he went to Oxford, he discovered, it is said, an inclination for pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto

boasted to have received his academical instruction from the author of the Night Thoughts.

It is probable that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington library was laid, two years after he had taken his bachelor's degree, Young was appointed to speak the Latin oration. This is, at least, particular for being dedicated in English, "To the ladies of the Codrington family." To these ladies he says, "that he was unavoidably flung into a singularity, by being obliged to write an epistle dedicatory void of commonplace, and such a one as was never published before by any author whatever; that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them, and that the bookseller approved of it, because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right."

Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll, if we may credit Curll, dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he says, that he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, "I have not the Epistle to lord Lansdowne. If you will take my advice, I would have you omit that, and the oration on Codrington. I think the collection will sell better without them."

There are those who relate, that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at

All Souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became.

The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased, some time before, by his death; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronised by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet Pope is said, by Ruffhead, to have told Warburton, that "Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him pass a *foolish youth*, the sport of peers and poets: but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour."

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life may, perhaps, be wrong; but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used to spend much of his time at All Souls. "The other boys," said the atheist, "I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read a hundred times; but that fellow Young is continually pestering me with something of his own[j]."

[j] As my great friend is now become the subject of biography, it should be told, that every time I called upon Johnson during the time I was employed in collecting materials for this life and putting it together, he

After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcilable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony of experience against vice.

We shall soon see that one of his earliest productions was more serious than what comes from the generality of unfledged poets.

Young, perhaps, ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the Poem to His Majesty, presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honour on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when queen Anne called up to the house of lords the sons of the earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one, at least, of the new lords, he published, in 1712, an Epistle to the right honourable George lord Lansdowne. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyrick with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the publick to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by showing that men are slain in war, and that in peace "harvests wave, and commerce swells her

never suffered me to depart without some such farewell as this: "Don't forget that rascal Tindal, sir. Be sure to hang up the atheist." Alluding to this anecdote, which Johnson had mentioned to me.

sail." If this be humanity, for which he meant it; is it politicks? Another purpose of this epistle appears to have been, to prepare the publick for the reception of some tragedy he might have in hand. His lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him "repent his passion for the stage;" and the particular praise bestowed on Othello and Oroonoko looks as if some such character as Zanga was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison, of New college, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so wonderfully, some time afterwards, in the Night Thoughts, of making the publick a party in his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought, at least, to be remembered, that he did not insert it in his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The booksellers, in the late body of English poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors[k]. This I shall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I think," says he, "the following pieces in *four* volumes to be the most excusable of all that I have written; and I wish *less apology* was needful for these. As there is no recalling what is got abroad, the pieces here republished I have revised and corrected, and rendered them as *pardonable* as it was in my power to do."

[k] Dr. Johnson, in many cases, thought and directed differently, particularly in Young's works. J. N.

Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against literary sinners?

When Addison published Cato, in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the Night Thoughts did not republish.

On the appearance of his Poem on the Last Day, Addison did not return Young's compliment; but the Englishman of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The Last Day was published soon after the peace. The vicechancellor's *imprimatur*, for it was printed at Oxford, is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the exordium, Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards "with Britain's hero set their souls on fire," he draws, he says, a deeper scene. Marlborough *had been* considered by Britain as her *hero;* but, when the Last Day was published, female cabal had blasted, for a time, the laurels of Blenheim. This serious poem was finished by Young as early as 1710, before he was thirty; for part of it is printed in the Tatler[1]. It was inscribed to the queen, in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himself, is the obligation which he formerly received from her royal indulgence.

Of this obligation nothing is now known, unless he alluded to her being his godmother. He is said, indeed, to have been engaged at a settled stipend as

[1] Not in the Tatler, but in the Guardian, May 9, 1713.

a writer for the court. In Swift's Rhapsody on Poetry are these lines, speaking of the court:

> Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace,
> Where Pope will never show his face,
> Where Y——— must torture his invention
> To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.

That Y——means Young seems clear from four other lines in the same poem:

> Attend, ye Popes and Youngs and Gays,
> And tune your harps and strew your bays;
> Your panegyricks here provide;
> You cannot err on flatt'ry's side.

Yet who shall say, with certainty, that Young was a pensioner? In all modern periods of this country, have not the writers on one side been regularly called hirelings, and on the other patriots?

Of the dedication, the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace; it gives her majesty praise, indeed, for her victories, but says, that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her; nor will he lose her there, he says, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The queen was soon called away from this lower

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world, to a place where human praise or human flattery, even less general than this, are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance towards politicks, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet subsided. The Last Day, written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry, and their friends.

Before the queen's death, the Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love, was sent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of lady Jane Grey, and her husband lord Guildford, 1554, a story, chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his presumption, that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. "To behold," he proceeds, "a person *only* virtuous, stirs in us a prudent regret; to behold a person *only* amiable to the sight, warms us with a religious indignation; but to turn our eyes on a countess of Salisbury gives us pleasure and improvement; it works a sort of miracle, occasions the bias of our nature to fall off from sin, and makes our very senses and affections converts to our religion, and promoters of our duty." His flattery

was as ready for the other sex as for ours, and was, at least, as well adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his friend Jervas that he is just arrived from Oxford; that every one is much concerned for the queen's death, but that no panegyricks are ready yet for the king. Nothing like friendship had yet taken place between Pope and Young; for, soon after the event which Pope mentions, Young published a poem on the queen's death, and his majesty's accession to the throne. It is inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the lords justices. Whatever were the obligations, which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aim at something of the same sort from George. Of the poem, the intention seems to have been to show, that he had the same extravagant strain of praise for a king as for a queen. To discover, at the very outset of a foreigner's reign, that the gods bless his new subjects in such a king, is something more than praise. Neither was this deemed one of his *excusable pieces.* We do not find it in his works.

Young's father had been well acquainted with lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, esq. afterwards marquis of Wharton; a lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller.

To the dean of Sarum's visitation sermon, already mentioned, were added some verses "by that excellent poetess Mrs. Anne Wharton," upon its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller,

by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion. The marquis died in April, 1715. In the beginning of the next year the young marquis set out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelve-month. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, says the Biographia, "on the score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the honour done him of being admitted, though under age, to take his seat in the house of lords."

With this unhappy character, it is not unlikely that Young went to Ireland. From his letter to Richardson, on Original Composition, it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. "I remember," says he, in that letter, speaking of Swift, "as I and others were taking with him an evening walk, about a mile out of Dublin, he stopped short: we passed on; but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm, which in its uppermost branches was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, 'I shall be like that tree, I shall die at top.'" Is it not probable, that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron[m]?

From the Englishman, it appears that a tragedy

[m]See a letter from the duke of Wharton to Swift, dated 1717, in Swift's works, in which he mentions Young being then in Ireland. J. B. N.

by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713. Yet Busiris was not brought upon Drury-lane stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the duke of Newcastle, "because the late instances he had received of his grace's undeserved and uncommon favour, in an affair of some consequence, foreign to the theatre, had taken from him the privilege of choosing a patron." The dedication he afterwards suppressed.

Busiris was followed, in the year 1721, by the Revenge. He dedicated this famous tragedy to the duke of Wharton. "Your grace," says the dedication, "has been pleased to make yourself accessory to the following scenes, not only by suggesting the most beautiful incident in them, but by making all possible provision for the success of the whole."

That his grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident might have been, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida, in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated Marriage à-la-Mode to Wharton's infamous relation, Rochester, whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus: "My present fortune is his bounty, and my future his care; which I will venture to say will be always remembered to his honour, since he, I know, intended his generosity as an encouragement to merit, though through his very pardonable partiality to one who bears him

so sincere a duty and respect, I happen to receive the benefit of it." That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this dedication from his works. He should have remembered that he, at the same time, concealed his obligation to Wharton for *the most beautiful incident* in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

> Be this thy partial smile from censure free!
> 'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.

While Young, who, in his Love of Fame, complains grieviously how often "dedications wash an Æthiop white," was painting an amiable duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was, perhaps, beginning to describe the "scorn and wonder of his days" in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and the duke's regard for Young, added to his "lust of praise," procured to All Souls' college a donation, which was not forgotten by the poet when he dedicated the Revenge.

It will surprise you to see me cite second Atkins, case 136, Stiles *versus* the Attorney General, March 14, 1740, as authority for the life of a poet. But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of the persons whom they record. Chan-

cellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities, granted by the duke of Wharton to Young, were for legal considerations. One was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his grace's bounty in a style princely and commendable, if not legal —"considering that the publick good is advanced by the encouragement of learning and the polite arts, and being pleased therein with the attempts of Dr. Young, in consideration thereof, and of the love I bear him," &c. The other was dated the 10th of July, 1722.

Young, on his examination, swore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of 100*l.* which had been offered him for life if he would continue tutor to lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the duke of Wharton, and his grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared, that the duke had given him a bond for 600*l.* dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journeys, and being at great expenses, in order to be chosen member of the house of commons, at the duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of 200*l.* and 400*l.* in the gift of All Souls' college, on his grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

Of his adventures in the Exeter family I am unable to give any account. The attempt to get into parliament, was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His grace discovered in him talents for oratory, as well as for poetry. Nor was

this judgment wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the Biographia, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears. But we must pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek:

> *In joy once join'd*, in sorrow, now, for years —
> Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
> Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.

From your account of Tickell it appears that he and Young used to "communicate to each other whatever verses they wrote even to the least things."

In 1719 appeared a Paraphrase on part of the book of Job. Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be known from his letter to Curll: "You seem, in the collection you propose, to have omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean 'a translation from part of Job,' printed by Mr. Tonson." The dedication, which was only suffered to

appear in Mr. Tonson's edition, while it speaks with satisfaction of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. But every one who sings in the dark does not sing from joy. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his satires it would not have been possible to fix the dates, without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in your account of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the poems, to discover when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first satire laments, that "Guilt's chief foe in Addison is fled." The second, addressing himself, asks:

> Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,
> Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?
> A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published separately, in folio, under the title of the Universal Passion. These passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his satires soon after he had written the Paraphrase on Job. The last satire was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726. In December, 1725, the king, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped, with great difficulty, from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns

the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastick strain of compliment, as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty.

From the sixth of these poems we learn,

> Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's heart
> Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art:

since the grateful poet tells us, in the next couplet,

> Her favour is diffus'd to that degree,
> Excess of goodness! it has dawn'd on me.

Her majesty had stood godmother, and given her name, to the daughter of the lady whom Young married in 1731; and had, perhaps, shown some attention to lady Elizabeth's future husband.

The fifth satire, on Women, was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these poems, when, in 1728, he gathered them into one publication, he prefixed a preface; in which he observes, that "no man can converse much in the world, but at what he meets with he must either be insensible or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule," he adds, "I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and gives vice and folly the greatest offence. Laughing at the misconduct of the world, will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another than by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and so of course thought, the lively and witty satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote the

Last Day. After all, Swift pronounced of these satires, that they should either have been more angry or more merry.

Is it not somewhat singular that Young preserved, without any palliation, this preface, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains the mournful, angry, gloomy Night Thoughts?

At the conclusion of the preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the Birth of Love to modern poetry, with the addition, "that poetry, like love, is a little subject to blindness, which makes her mistake her way to preferments and honours; and that she retains a dutiful admiration of her father's family; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours; but was there not something like blindness in the flattery which he sometimes forced her, and her sister prose, to utter? She was always, indeed, taught by him to entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but surely Young, though nearly related to poetry, had no connection with her whom Plato makes the mother of love. That he could not well complain of being related to poverty, appears clearly from the frequent bounties which his gratitude records, and from the wealth which he left behind him. By the Universal Passion he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thousand pounds. A considerable sum had already been swallowed up in the South sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an

author. His muse makes poetical use more than once of a South sea dream.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his manuscript anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his Universal Passion, received from the duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, "two thousand pounds for a poem!" he said it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth four thousand.

This story may be true; but it seems to have been raised from the two answers of lord Burghley and sir Philip Sidney in Spenser's Life.

After inscribing his satires, not perhaps without the hopes of preferment and honours, to such names as the duke of Dorset, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, lady Elizabeth Germaine, and sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyrick. In 1726, he addressed a poem to sir Robert Walpole, of which the title sufficiently explains the intention. If Young must be acknowledged a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a lasting one. The Instalment is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his *excusable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality:

> Oh! how I long, enkindled by the theme,
> In deep eternity to launch thy name!

The bounty of the former reign seems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it might have been, the poet thought he de-

served it; for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgment, would now, perhaps, never have been known:

> My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire.
> The streams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,
> Refresh the dry domains of poesy.

If the purity of modern patriotism will term Young a pensioner, it must, at least, be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with Ocean, an Ode. The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase and the encouragement of the seamen; that they might be "invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country;" a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an Ode to the King, Pater Patriæ, and an Essay on Lyrick Poetry. It is but justice to confess, that he preserved neither of them; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition, and in the last, consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a Wish, that included the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming; and of which few, after having formed it, would confess something like their shame by suppression.

It stood originally so high in the author's opinion, that he entitled the poem, Ocean, an Ode. Conclud-

ing with a Wish. This wish consists of thirteen stanzas. The first runs thus:

O may I *steal*
Along the *vale*
Of humble life, secure from foes!
My friend sincere,
My judgment clear,
And gentle business my repose!

The three last stanzas are not more remarkable for just rhymes; but, altogether, they will make rather a curious page in the life of Young:

Prophetic schemes,
And golden dreams,
May I, unsanguine, cast away!
Have what I *have*,
And live, not *leave*,
Enamour'd of the present day!

My hours my own!
My faults unknown!
My chief revenue in content!
Then leave one *beam*
Of honest *fame!*
And scorn the labour'd monument!

Unhurt my urn
Till that great TURN
When mighty nature's self shall die;
Time cease to glide,
With human pride,
Sunk in the ocean of eternity!

It is whimsical that he, who was soon to bid adieu to rhyme, should fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his Essay on Lyrick Poetry, prefixed to the poem: "For the more *harmony* likewise I chose the frequent return of rhyme, which laid me under great

difficulties. But difficulties overcome, give grace and pleasure. Nor can I account for the *pleasure of rhyme in general*, (of which the moderns are too fond,) but from this truth." Yet the moderns surely deserve not much censure for their fondness of what, by his own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

The next paragraph in his essay did not occur to him when he talked of "that great turn" in the stanza just quoted. "But then the writer must take care that the difficulty is overcome. That is, he must make rhyme consist with as perfect sense and expression, as could be expected if he was perfectly free from that shackle."

Another part of this essay will convict the following stanza of, what every reader will discover in it, "involuntary burlesque:"

> The northern blast,
> The shatter'd mast,
> The syrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,
> The breaking spout,
> The *stars gone out*,
> The boiling strait, the monster's shock.

But would the English poets fill quite so many volumes, if all their productions were to be tried, like this, by an elaborate essay on each particular species of poetry of which they exhibit specimens?

If Young be not a lyrick poet, he is, at least, a critick in that sort of poetry; and, if his lyrick poetry can be proved bad, it was first proved so by his own criticism. This surely is candid.

Milbourne was styled, by Pope, "the fairest of

criticks," only because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's, which he condemned, and with which every reader had it not otherwise in his power to compare it. Young was surely not the most unfair of poets for prefixing to a lyrick composition an essay on lyrick poetry, so just and impartial as to condemn himself.

We shall soon come to a work, before which we find, indeed, no critical essay, but which disdains to shrink from the touchstone of the severest critick; and which certainly, as I remember to have heard you say, if it contain some of the worst, contains also some of the best things in the language.

Soon after the appearance of Ocean, when he was almost fifty, Young entered into orders. In April, 1728[n], not long after he had put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the second.

The tragedy of the Brothers, which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it, with some reluctance, to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The epilogue to the Brothers, the only appendage to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an historical epilogue. Finding that "Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied," he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus "for this night's deed."

[n] Davies, in his life of Garrick, says 1720, and that it was produced thirty-three years after.

Of Young's taking orders something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of the poet in a singular light. When he determined on the church, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in theology; but to Pope, who, in a youthful frolick, advised the diligent perusal of Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls "an irretrievable derangement."

That attachment to his favourite study, which made him think a poet the surest guide to his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry was the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not long, indeed, after he took orders, he published, in prose, 1728, a true Estimate of Human Life, dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the queen; and a sermon preached before the house of commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of king Charles, entitled, an Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government. But the Second Discourse, the counterpart of his Estimate, without which it cannot be called a *true* Estimate, though, in 1728, it was announced as "soon to be published," never appeared; and his old friends the muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he relapsed to poetry, and sent into the world, Im-

perium Pelagi, a naval lyrick, written in imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by his majesty's return from Hanover, September, 1729, and the succeeding peace. It is inscribed to the duke of Chandos. In the preface we are told, that the ode is the most spirited kind of poetry, and that the Pindarick is the most spirited kind of ode. "This I speak," he adds, "with sufficient candour, at my own very great peril. But truth has an eternal title to our confession, though we are sure to suffer by it." Behold, again, the fairest of poets. Young's Imperium Pelagi was ridiculed in Fielding's Tom Thumb; but let us not forget that it was one of his pieces which the author of the Night Thoughts deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindarick attempt, he published two epistles to Pope, concerning the Authors of the Age, 1730. Of these poems, one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious for promotion in the church.

In July, 1730, he was presented, by his college, to the rectory of Welwyn, in Hertfordshire. In May, 1731, he married lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the earl of Lichfield, and widow of colonel Lee. His connexion with this lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with lady Anne Wharton, who was coheiress of sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire. Poetry had lately been taught by Addison to aspire to the arms of nobility, though not with extraordinary happiness.

We may naturally conclude, that Young now

gave himself up, in some measure, to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment, which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner in which they had so frequently been exerted.

The next production of his muse was the Sea-piece, in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an Extempore Epigram on Voltaire; who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, Milton's allegory of Sin and Death:

> You are so witty, profligate, and thin,
> At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin.

From the following passage, in the poetical dedication of his Sea-piece to Voltaire, it seems, that this extemporaneous reproof, if it must be extemporaneous (for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof,) was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than the distich just quoted:

> No stranger, sir, though born in foreign climes.
> On *Dorset* downs, when Milton's page
> With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
> Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with *gentle* rhymes?

By Dorset downs, he probably meant Mr. Dodington's seat. In Pitt's poems is an Epistle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eastbury, in Dorsetshire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722.

> While with your Dodington retir'd you sit,
> Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit, &c.

Thomson, in his Autumn, addressing Mr. Dodington, calls his seat the seat of the muses,

> Where, in the secret bow'r and winding walk,
> For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.

The praises Thomson bestows but a few lines before on Philips, the second

> Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
> With British freedom sing the British song,

added to Thomson's example and success, might, perhaps, induce Young, as we shall see presently, to write his great work without rhyme.

In 1734 he published the Foreign Address, or the best Argument for Peace, occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Written in the character of a sailor. It is not to be found in the author's four volumes.

He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and, perhaps, at last resolved to turn his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode, which few of Young's readers will regret:

> My shell, which Clio gave, which *kings applaud*,
> Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd abroad,
> Adieu!

In a species of poetry altogether his own, he next tried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife, he was deprived in 1741. Lady Elizabeth had lost, after her marriage with Young, an amiable daughter, by her former husband, just after she was married to Mr. Temple, son of lord Pal-

merston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife, though he was married a second time to a daughter of sir John Barnard, whose son is the present peer. Mr. and Mrs. Temple have generally been considered as Philander and Narcissa. From the great friendship which constantly subsisted between Mr. Temple and Young, as well as from other circumstances, it is probable that the poet had both him and Mrs. Temple in view for these characters; though, at the same time, some passages respecting Philander do not appear to suit either Mr. Temple or any other person with whom Young was known to be connected or acquainted, while all the circumstances relating to Narcissa have been constantly found applicable to Young's daughter-in-law.

At what short intervals the poet tells us he was wounded by the deaths of the three persons particularly lamented, none that has read the Night Thoughts (and who has not read them?) needs to be informed.

> Insatiate archer! could not one suffice?
> Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;
> And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

Yet how is it possible that Mr. and Mrs. Temple and lady Elizabeth Young could be these three victims, over whom Young has hitherto been pitied for having to pour the Midnight Sorrows of his religious poetry; Mrs. Temple died in 1736; Mr. Temple four years afterwards, in 1740; and the poet's wife seven months after Mr. Temple, in 1741. How could the insatiate archer thrice slay his peace,

in these three persons, "ere thrice the moon had fill'd her horn?"

But, in the short preface to the Complaint, he seriously tell us, "that the occasion of this poem was real, not fictitious; and that the facts mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of the writer." It is probable, therefore, that in these three contradictory lines, the poet complains more than the father-in-law, the friend, or the widower.

Whatever names belong to these facts, or if the names be those generally supposed, whatever heightening a poet's sorrow may have given the facts; to the sorrow Young felt from them, religion and morality are indebted for the Night Thoughts. There is a pleasure sure in sadness which mourners only know!

Of these poems, the two or three first have been perused, perhaps more eagerly and more frequently than the rest. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his original motive for taking up the pen was answered; his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We still find the same pious poet; but we hear less of Philander and Narcissa, and less of the mourner whom he loved to pity.

Mrs. Temple died of a consumption at Lyons, in her way to Nice, the year after her marriage; that is, when poetry relates the fact, "in her bridal hour." It is more than poetically true, that Young accompanied her to the Continent:

> I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,
> And bore her nearer to the sun.

But in vain. Her funeral was attended with the difficulties painted in such animated colours in Night the Third. After her death, the remainder of the party passed the ensuing winter at Nice.

The poet seems, perhaps, in these compositions, to dwell with more melancholy on the death of Philander and Narcissa, than of his wife. But it is only for this reason. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the Night Thoughts Philander and Narcissa are often mentioned and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living, to whom the prince of Wales was godfather.

That domestick grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language, it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness to contend, that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means sure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of his satires. In so long a life, causes for discontent and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me that his muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. Night thoughts were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet, and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor

gloominess. In his Last Day, almost his earliest poem, he calls her the Melancholy Maid,

> Whom dismal scenes delight,
> Frequent at tombs and in the realms of night.

In the prayer which concludes the second book of the same poem, he says—

> Oh! permit the gloom of solemn night
> To sacred thought may forcibly invite.
> Oh! how divine to tread the milky way,
> To the bright palace of eternal day!

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is said by Spence to have sent him a human skull, with a candle in it, as a lamp; and the poet is reported to have used it.

What he calls the *true* Estimate of Human Life, which has already been mentioned, exhibits only the wrong side of the tapestry; and, being asked why he did not show the right, he is said to have replied that he could not. By others it has been told me that this was finished; but that, before there existed any copy, it was torn in pieces by a lady's monkey.

Still, is it altogether fair to dress up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the Night Thoughts to prove the gloominess of Young, and to show that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was, in some measure, the sullen inspiration of discontent.

From them who answer in the affirmative it should not be concealed, that, though "Invisibilia non decipiunt" appeared upon a deception in Young's grounds, and "Ambulantes in horto audiêrunt vocem

Dei" on a building in his garden, his parish was indebted to the good humour of the author of the Night Thoughts for an assembly and a bowling-green.

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous "De mortuis nil nisi bonum" always appeared to me to savour more of female weakness than of manly reason. He that has too much feeling to speak ill of the dead, who, if they cannot defend themselves, are, at least, ignorant of his abuse, will not hesitate, by the most wanton calumny, to destroy the quiet, the reputation, the fortune, of the living. Yet censure is not heard beneath the tomb, any more than praise. "De mortuis nil nisi verum—De vivis nil nisi bonum," would approach much nearer to good sense. After all, the few handfuls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the Night Thoughts feel not much concern whether Young pass now for a man of sorrow, or for a "fellow of infinite jest." To this favour must come the whole family of Yorick. His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is still less solicitous on this head.

But to a son of worth and sensibility it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded, at last, in bringing his "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

The humanity of the world, little satisfied with

inventing perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The Biographia and every account of Young pretty roundly assert this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the Biographia itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the Night Thoughts with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as their Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be true, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proof? Perhaps it is clear from the poems.

From the first line to the last of the Night Thoughts no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the Second Night I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the duke of Wharton's set. The poet styles him "gay friend;" an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horrour. A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short poem of fourteen lines in the early part of his life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the First Night, the address to the poet's supposed son is,

> Lorenzo, fortune makes her court to thee.

In the Fifth Night;

> And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
> Of life? to hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of Welwyn?

Eighth Night;

> In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far;)

which even now does not apply to his son.

In Night Five;

> So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate;
> Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes;
> And dy'd to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

At the beginning of the Fifth Night we find;

> Lorenzo! to recriminate is just;
> I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

But, to cut short all inquiry; if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems, be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the

author of the Night Thoughts was not old enough, when they were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The Night Thoughts were begun immediately after the mournful event of 1741. The first Nights appear, in the books of the company of Stationers, as the property of Robert Dodsley, in 1742. The preface to Night Seven is dated July 7th, 1744. The marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in May, 1731. Young's child was not born till June, 1733. In 1741 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this father to whose education vice had for some years put the last hand, was only eight years old.

An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

Who, then, was Lorenzo? exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If we cannot be sure that he was his son, which would have been finely terrible, was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the poet's fancy: like the Quintus of Anti-Lucretius, "quo nomine," says Polignac, "quemvis Atheum intellige." That this was the case, many expressions in the Night Thoughts would seem to prove, did not a passage in Night Eight appear to show that he had something in his eye for the groundwork, at least, of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be

feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

> Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead,
> Or send thee to her hermitage with L———.

The Biographia, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that son's lifetime, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford, for misbehaviour. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the life of Young, it is not easy to discover. Was the son of the author of the Night Thoughts, indeed, forbidden his college for a time, at one of the universities? The author of Paradise Lost is by some supposed to have been disgracefully ejected from the other. From juvenile follies who is free? But, whatever the Biographia chooses to relate, the son of Young experienced no dismission from his college, either lasting or temporary.

Yet, were nature to indulge him with a second youth, and to leave him at the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably spend it differently — who would not? — he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father. But, from the same experience, he would as certainly, in the same case, be treated differently by his father.

Young was a poet: poets, with reverence be it spoken, do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of com-

mon duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when compelled by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poets.

He who is connected with the author of the Night Thoughts, only by veneration for the poet and the christian, may be allowed to observe, that Young is one of those, concerning whom, as you remark in your account of Addison, it is proper rather to say "nothing that is false, than all that is true."

But the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expense of his father's memory, from follies which, if it may be thought blamable in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praiseworthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of the Night Thoughts, notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himself from earls and dukes, from speakers of the house of commons, lords commissioners of the treasury, and chancellors of the exchequer. In Night Eight the politician plainly betrays himself:

> Think no post needful that demands a knave!
> When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
> So P——— thought; think better if you can.

Yet it must be confessed, that at the conclusion of

Night Nine, weary, perhaps, of courting earthly patrons, he tells his soul,

> Henceforth
> Thy *patron* he, whose diadem has dropt
> Yon gems of heaven; eternity thy prize;
> And leave the racers of the world their own.

The Fourth Night was addressed, by a "much-indebted muse," to the honourable Mr. Yorke, now lord Hardwicke; who meant to have laid the muse under still greater obligation, by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The First Night concludes with this passage:

> Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides:
> Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your strain;
> Or his who made Meonides our own!
> Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing.
> Oh! had he prest his theme, pursu'd the track
> Which opens out of darkness into day!
> Oh! had he mounted on his wing of fire,
> Soar'd, where I sink, and sung immortal man —
> How had it blest mankind, and rescu'd me!

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of an Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his "wing of fire," and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and approved the dedication, he countenanced this attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his muse.

Part of "paper-sparing" Pope's third book of the Odyssey, deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a letter signed "E. Young,"

which is clearly the handwriting of our Young. The letter, dated only May the 2nd, seems obscure; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The request was a prologue, I am told.

"May the 2nd.

"DEAR SIR,—Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that instance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friendship I am very sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to conceive how a 'trifle of this nature' may be of serious moment to me; and while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall not be so absurd as to make any further step without it. I know you are much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leisure.

"I am, sir, your most faithful,

"and obedient servant,

"E. YOUNG."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in Night Seven,

Pope, who couldst make immortals, art thou dead?

Either the Essay, then, was dedicated to a patron, who disapproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young appears, in his old age, to have bartered for a dedication, an opinion entertained of his friend through

all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in Night Four, should not be excluded. They afford a picture by his own hand, from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life:

> Ah me! the dire effect
> Of loit'ring here, of death defrauded long;
> Of old so gracious (and let that suffice)
> *My very master knows me not.*
> I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.
>
> *
>
> When in his courtiers' ears I pour my plaint,
> They drink it as the nectar of the great;
> And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.
>
> *
>
> Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
> Court-favour, yet untaken, I *besiege.*
>
> *
>
> If this song lives, posterity shall know
> One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
> Who thought e'en gold might come a day too late;
> Nor on his subtle deathbed plann'd his scheme
> For future vacancies in church or state.

Deduct from the writer's age "twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy," and you will still leave him more than forty when he sat down to the miserable siege of court-favour. He has before told us,

> A fool at forty is a fool indeed.

After all, the siege seems to have been raised only in consequence of what the General thought his "deathbed."

By these extraordinary poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much, I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, the Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts. While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear, perhaps, in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator; he would not pass for a worse christian, or for a worse man. This enviable praise is due to Young. Can it be claimed by every writer? His dedications, after all, he had, perhaps, no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received, and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgment of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his Night Thoughts the French are particularly fond?

Of the Epitaph on lord Aubrey Beauclerk, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of English poetry, and that I am sorry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the Night Thoughts of every thing

which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politicks. In 1745 he wrote Reflections on the public Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the duke of Newcastle; indignant, as it appears, to behold

> A pope-bred princeling crawl ashore,
> And whistle cut-throats, with those swords that scrap'd
> Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance,
> To cut his passage to the British throne.

This political poem might be called a Night Thought. Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the Night Thoughts, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the second edition of Howe's Devout Meditations, is a letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macauly, esq. thanking him for the book, which he says "he shall never lay far out of his reach; for a greater demonstration of a sound head and a sincere heart he never saw."

In 1753, when the Brothers had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the society for the propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of the Brothers would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but by the bad success of his play the society was not a loser. The author made up the sum he originally intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entitled, the Centaur not fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue. The conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third letter is described the deathbed of the "gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont." His last words were, "my principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife!" Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the twin production of fancy, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness. Report has been accustomed to call Altamont lord Euston.

The Old Man's Relapse, occasioned by an epistle to Walpole, if written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a miscellany published thirty years before his death. In 1758, he exhibited the Old Man's Relapse, in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a sermon addressed to the king.

The lively letter in prose, on Original Composition, addressed to Richardson, the author of Clarissa, appeared in 1759. "Though he despairs of breaking through the frozen obstructions of age and care's incumbent cloud, into that flow of thought and brightness of expression, which subjects so polite require;" yet is it more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded fourscore.

Some sevenfold volumes put him in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conflagration:

——— ostia septem
Pulverulenta vocant, septem sine flumine valles.

Such leaden labours are like Lycurgus's iron money, which was so much less in value than in bulk, that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

If there is a famine of invention in the land, we must travel, he says, like Joseph's brethren, far for food; we must visit the remote and rich ancients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home: that, like the widow's cruise, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. He asks why it should seem altogether impossible, that heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and fair? And Jonson, he tells us, was very learned, as Sampson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it.

Is this "care's incumbent cloud," or "the frozen obstructions of age?"

In this letter Pope is severely censured for his "fall from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds; for putting Achilles into petticoats a second time:" but we are told that the dying swan talked over an epick plan with Young a few weeks before his decease.

Young's chief inducement to write this letter was, as he confesses, that he might erect a monumental marble to the memory of an old friend. He, who employed his pious pen, for almost the last time, in thus doing justice to the exemplary deathbed of Addison, might, probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lesson for the deaths of others.

In the postscript, he writes to Richardson, that he will see in his next how far Addison is an original. But no other letter appears.

The few lines which stand in the last edition, as "sent by lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not long before his lordship's death," were, indeed, so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by "the muse's latest spark." The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his Tusculum, La Trappe.

"Love thy country, wish it well,
Not with too intense a care;
'Tis enough that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, flatt'ry's praise,
With unmov'd indiff'rence view;
Learn to tread life's dang'rous maze,
With unerring virtue's clew.

Void of strong desire and fear,
Life's wide ocean trust no more;
Strive thy little bark to steer
With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the port of peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free;
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be;

Easy shall thy passage be,
Cheerful thy allotted stay,
Short th' account 'twixt God and thee:
Hope shall meet thee on the way:

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's self shall let thee in,
Where its never-changing state
Full perfection shall begin."

The poem was accompanied by a letter.

"La Trappe, the 27th of Oct. 1761.

"DEAR SIR,—You seemed to like the ode I sent you for your amusement: I now send it you as a present. If you please to accept of it, and are willing that our friendship should be known when we are gone, you will be pleased to leave this among those of your own papers that may possibly see the light by a posthumous publication. God send us health while we stay, and an easy journey!

"My dear Dr. Young,

"yours, most cordially,

"MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a short time before his death, Young published Resignation. Notwithstanding the manner in which it was really forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise, on the other side of fourscore, by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited?

To Mrs. Montagu, the famous champion of Shakespeare, I am indebted for the history of Resignation. Observing that Mrs. Boscawen, in the midst of her grief for the loss of the admiral, derived consolation from the perusal of the Night Thoughts, Mrs. Montagu proposed a visit to the author. From conversing with Young, Mrs. Boscawen derived still further consolation; and to that visit she and the world were indebted for this poem. It compliments Mrs. Montagu in the following lines:

> Yet write I must. A lady sues:
> How shameful her request!
> My brain in labour with dull rhyme,
> Hers teeming with the best!

And again;

> A friend you have, and I the same,
> Whose prudent, soft address
> Will bring to life those healing thoughts
> Which dy'd in your distress.
>
> That friend, the spirit of thy theme
> Extracting for your ease,
> Will leave to me the dreg, in thoughts
> Too common; such as these.

By the same lady I am enabled to say, in her own words, that Young's unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion than even in the author; that the christian was in him a character still more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime, than the poet; and that, in his ordinary conversation,

> Letting down the golden chain from high,
> He drew his audience upward to the sky.

Notwithstanding Young had said, in his Conjec-

tures on original Composition, that "blank verse is verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaimed, reinthroned in the true language of the gods," notwithsanding he administered consolation to his own grief in this immortal language, Mrs. Boscawen was comforted in rhyme.

While the poet and the christian were applying this comfort, Young had himself occasion for comfort, in consequence of the sudden death of Richardson, who was printing the former part of the poem. Of Richardson's death he says,

> When heav'n would kindly set us free,
> And earth's enchantment end;
> It takes the most effectual means,
> And robs us of a friend.

To Resignation was prefixed an apology for its appearance; to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February, 1760, he desires of his executors, "in a particular manner," that all his manuscript books and writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September, 1764, he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his housekeeper, to whom he left 1000*l.* "that all his manuscripts might be destroyed, as soon as he was dead, which would greatly oblige her deceased *friend.*"

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviv-

ing those he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two *friends*, his housekeeper and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may serve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for sounding names and titles, to be informed, that the author of the Night Thoughts did not blush to leave a legacy to "his friend Henry Stevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate." Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young. But, at eighty-four, "where," as he asks in the Centaur, "is that world into which we were born?"

The same humility which marked a hatter and a housekeeper for the friends of the author of the Night Thoughts had before bestowed the same title on his footman, in an epitaph in his Church-yard upon James Barker, dated 1749; which I am glad to find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published by Kidgell, in 1755, called the Card, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fusby.

In April, 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young.

He had performed no duty for three or four years, but he retained his intellects to the last.

Much is told in the Biographia, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial; of the master and children of a charity-school, which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was

not caused to toll so often as upon those occasions bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead, been shown in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the preface to Night Seven, for resenting his friend's request about his funeral.

During some part of his life Young was abroad, but I have not been able to learn any particulars.

In his seventh Satire he says,

> When, after battle, I the field have SEEN
> Spread o'er with ghastly shapes which once were *men*.

It is known also, that from this, or from some other field, he once wandered into the enemy's camp, with a classick in his hand, which he was reading intently; and had some difficulty to prove that he was only an absent poet, and not a spy.

The curious reader of Young's life will naturally inquire to what it was owing, that though he lived almost forty years after he took orders, which included one whole reign, uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the Night Thoughts ended his days upon a living which came to him from his college, without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the church. To satisfy curiosity of this kind is, at this

distance of time, far from easy. The parties themselves know not often, at the instant, why they are neglected, or why they are preferred. The neglect of Young is by some ascribed to his having attached himself to the prince of Wales, and to his having preached an offensive sermon at St. James's. It has been told me, that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, whenever any one reminded the king of Young, the only answer was, "he has a pension." All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following letter from Secker, only serves to show at what a late period of life the author of the Night Thoughts solicited preferment.

"Deanery of St. Paul's, July 8, 1758.

"Good Dr. Young,—I have long wondered, that more suitable notice of your great merit hath not been taken by persons in power. But how to remedy the omission I see not. No encouragement hath ever been given me to mention things of this nature to his majesty. And therefore, in all likelihood, the only consequence of doing it would be weakening the little influence which else I may possibly have on some other occasions. Your fortune and your reputation set you above the need of advancement; and your sentiments, above that concern for it, on your own account, which, on that of the publick, is sincerely felt by

"Your loving brother,

"Tho. Cant."

At last, at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, clerk of the closet to the princess dowager.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment, after which his whole life seems to have panted. Though he took orders, he never entirely shook off politicks. He was always the lion of his master Milton, "pawing to get free his hinder parts." By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Again: Young was a poet; and again, with reverence be it spoken, poets by profession, do not always make the best clergymen. If the author of the Night Thoughts composed many sermons, he did not oblige the the publick with many.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out for a man retired from the world. But he seemed to have forgotten that the same verse which contains "oblitus meorum," contains also "obliviscendus et illis." The brittle chain of worldly friendship and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore, it only appears that the shore also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world will find himself, in reality, deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The publick is not to be treated as the coxcomb treats his mistress; to be threatened with desertion, in order to increase fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being

neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with his tub.

Of the domestick manners and petty habits of the author of the Night Thoughts, I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority: but who shall dare to say, to-morrow I will be wise or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon inquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a letter from Tscharner, a noble foreigner, to count Haller, Tscharner says, he has lately spent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author tastes all the ease and pleasure mankind can desire. "Every thing about him shows the man, each individual being placed by rule. All is neat without art. He is very pleasant in conversation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may possibly be true; but Tscharner's was a first visit, a visit of curiosity and admiration, and a visit which the author expected.

Of Edward Young, an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's Parson Adams. The original of that famous painting was William Young, who was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the booksellers from Greek; and, if he did not seem to be his own friend, was, at least, no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained

belief in the world argues, were it not sufficiently known, that the author of the Night Thoughts bore some resemblance to Adams.

The attention which Young bestowed upon the perusal of books, is not unworthy imitation. When any passage pleased him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On these passages he bestowed a second reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned to much of what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books, which I have seen, are by those notes of approbation so swelled beyond their real bulk, that they will hardly shut.

> What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame!
> Earth's highest station ends in, *Here he lies!*
> And *dust to dust* concludes her noblest song!

The author of these lines is not without his *hic jacet*.

By the good sense of his son, it contains none of that praise which no marble can make the bad or the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deserving.

> M. S.
> Optimi parentis
> Edvardi Young, LL.D.
> hujus ecclesiæ rect.
> Et Elizabethæ
> fæm. prænob.
> Conjugis ejus amantissimæ,
> pio et gratissimo animo
> hoc marmor posuit
> F. Y.
> Filius superstes.

Is it not strange that the author of the Night

Thoughts has inscribed no monument to the memory of his lamented wife? Yet, what marble will endure as long as the poems?

Such, my good friend, is the account which I have been able to collect of the great Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear sir,

Your greatly obliged friend,

HERBERT CROFT, Jun.

Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 1780.

P. S. This account of Young was seen by you in manuscript, you know, sir; and, though I could not prevail on you to make any alteration, you insisted on striking out one passage, because it said, that, if I did not wish you to live long, for your sake, I did for the sake of myself and of the world. But this postscript you will not see before the printing of it; and I will say here, in spite of you, how I feel myself honoured and bettered by your friendship: and that, if I do credit to the church, after which I always longed, and for which I am now going to give in exchange the bar, though not at so late a period of life as Young took orders, it will be owing, in no small measure, to my having had the happiness of calling the author of the Rambler my friend[o].

H. C.

Oxford, Oct. 1782.

[o] Mr. Boswell discovered in this heavy piece of biography a successful imitation of Johnson's style. An eminent literary character exclaimed, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength."

Of Young's poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment; and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.

He was not one of those writers whom experience improves, and who, observing their own faults, become gradually correct. His poem on the Last Day, his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid: the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the Last Day makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horrour, that oppresses distinction, and disdains expression.

Endeavouring to express himself still more in Johnsonian phrase, he added, "It has all the contortions of the Sybil, without the inspiration." See Boswell, iv. According to Malone, this eminent person was Burke, and the observation is assigned to him, without hesitation, in Prin's Life. It has sometimes been attributed to G. Stevens. Ed.

His story of Jane Grey was never popular. It is written with elegance enough; but Jane is too heroick to be pitied.

The Universal Passion is, indeed, a very great performance. It is said to be a series of epigrams; but, if it be, it is what the author intended; his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth.

His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and Juvenal; and he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal, with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and, therefore, the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his Paraphrase on Job may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful; he, indeed, favoured himself, by choosing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyrick attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his Night Thoughts he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantations, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was Resignation; in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his Ocean or his Merchant. It was very falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour.

His tragedies, not making part of the collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Steevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In Busiris there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination:

but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terrour, or indignation. The Revenge approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and, therefore, keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested by Othello; but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of the Brothers I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the publick.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of Quicksilver with Pleasure[p], which I have heard repeated with approbation by a lady, of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact: but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his Night Thoughts, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs floating in space might be called the *cluster* of creation, he thinks of a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great vine, drinking the "nectareous juice of immortal life."

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable. In the Last Day he hopes to illustrate the reassembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the

[p] See Mrs. Piozzi's Anecdotes, 162.

"trump of doom" by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The prophet says of Tyre, that "her merchants are princes." Young says of Tyre, in his Merchant,

> Her merchants princes, and each *deck a throne.*

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, "Climes were paid down." Antithesis is his favourite: "They for kindness hate;" and, "because she's right, she's ever in the wrong."

His versification is his own: neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers; he picks up no hemistichs, he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry; and that he composed with great labour and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

MALLET

OF David Mallet, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

He was, by his original, one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author, called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be janitor of the high school at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune; for, when the duke of Montrose applied to the college of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were sent to see the world, they were entrusted to his care; and, having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he resided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank, and the highest character; to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the series. His first production was William and Mar-

garet[q]; of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not long afterwards he published the Excursion, 1728; a desultory and capricious view of such scenes of nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of the images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose Seasons were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on Verbal Criticism, 1733, was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand, or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit, and more confidence than knowledge. The versification is tolerable, nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was Eurydice, acted at Drury-lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a prologue and epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

[q] Mallet's William and Margaret was printed in Aaron Hill's Plain Dealer, No. 36, July 24, 1724. In its original state it was very different from what it is in the last edition of his works. Dr. J.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country, I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot, whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his Essay on Man, but concealed the author; and, when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly, what there was new. Mallet told him, that the newest piece was something called an Essay on Man, which he had inspected idly, and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of the subject had tossed it away. Pope to punish his self-conceit, told him the secret[r].

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared, 1750, for the press, Mallet was employed to prefix a life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some affectation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that, when he afterwards undertook the life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might, perhaps, forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When the prince of Wales was driven from the

[r] See note on this passage of Pope's life in the present edition.

palace, and, setting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate court, he endeavoured to increase his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year: Thomson, likewise, had a pension; and they were associated in the composition of the Mask of Alfred, which, in its original state, was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury-lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the life of Marlborough, let him know, that in the series of great men quickly to be exhibited, he should *find a niche* for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced: but Mallet let him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. "Mr. Mallet," says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to write for the stage?" Mallet then confessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it; and Alfred was produced.

The long retardation of the life of the duke of Marlborough shows, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was soon determined that his story should be delivered to posterity; and the papers, supposed to contain the necessary information, were delivered to lord Molesworth, who had

been his favourite in Flanders. When Molesworth died the same papers were transferred, with the same design, to sir Richard Steele, who, in some of his exigencies, put them in pawn. They then remained with the old dutchess, who, in her will, assigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thousand pounds, and a prohibition to insert any verses. Glover rejected, I suppose, with disdain, the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he had made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the prince's service he published Mustapha, with a prologue by Thomson, not mean, but far inferiour to that which he had received from Mallet, for Agamemnon. The epilogue, said to be written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the prince his master. It was acted at Drury-lane, in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the Mask of Alfred, in conjunction with Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was Amyntor and Theodora, 1747, a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy.

But it is blank verse. This he sold to Vaillant for one hundred and twenty pounds. The first sale was not great, and it is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain, or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorized number of the pamphlet called the Patriot King, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet, 1749, as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was referred to arbitrators; but when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and, by the help of Millar the bookseller, published all that he could find, but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1755, his Mask of Britannia was acted at Drury-lane; and his tragedy of Elvira in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper of the book of entries for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war, when the na-

tion was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the publick vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a Plain Man. The paper was, with great industry, circulated and dispersed; and he, for his seasonable intervention, had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after awhile, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April, 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter, who married an Italian of rank, named Cilesia, wrote a tragedy called Almida, which was acted at Drury-lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.

As a writer he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent. His dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten: his blank verse seems, to my ear, the echo of Thomson. His Life of Bacon is known, as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer, bustling

in the world, showing himself in publick, and emerging occasionally, from time to time, into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topicks of conversation and other modes of amusement.

AKENSIDE

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the 9th of November, 1721, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher, of the presbyterian sect; his mother's name was Mary Lumsden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle; and was afterwards instructed by Mr. Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himself for the office of a dissenting minister, and received some assistance from the fund which the dissenters employ in educating young men of scanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other scenes, and prompted other hopes; he determined to study physick, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpose, he justly thought it dishonourable to retain.

Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called, and thought, liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.

Akenside was one of those poets who have felt

very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greatest work, the Pleasures of Imagination, appeared in 1744. I have heard Dodsley, by whom it was published, relate, that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was a hundred and twenty pounds, being such as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, advised him not to make a niggardly offer; for "this was no every-day writer."

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards, May 16, 1744, became doctor of physick, having, according to the custom of the Dutch universities, published a thesis or dissertation. The subject which he chose was the Original and Growth of the Human Fœtus; in which he is said to have departed, with great judgment, from the opinion then established, and to have delivered that which has been since confirmed and received.

Akenside was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the sound of liberty, and, by an eccentricity which such dispositions do not easily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing established. He adopted Shaftesbury's foolish assertion of the efficacy of ridicule for the discovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and

defended by Dyson: Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The result of all the arguments, which have been produced in a long and eager discussion of this idle question, may easily be collected. If ridicule be applied to any position, as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the test of ridicule. Two men, fearing, one a real and the other a fancied danger, will be for awhile equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice, contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representations; and the true state of both cases must be known, before it can be decided whose terrour is rational, and whose is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who to be despised. Both are for awhile equally exposed to laughter, but both are not, therefore, equally contemptible.

In the revisal of his poem, though he died before he had finished it, he omitted the lines which had given occasion to Warburton's objections.

He published, soon after his return from Leyden, 1745, his first collection of odes; and was impelled, by his rage of patriotism, to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes, under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profession, he first commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouse then practised with such reputation and suc-

cess, that a stranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Akenside tried the contest awhile; and, having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampstead, where he resided more than two years, and then fixed himself in London, the proper place for a man of accomplishments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would, perhaps, have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A physician in a great city seems to be the mere plaything of fortune; his degree of reputation is, for the most part, totally casual; they that employ him know not his excellence; they that reject him know not his deficience. By any acute observer, who had looked on the transactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the Fortune of Physicians[8].

Akenside appears not to have been wanting to his own success: he placed himself in view by all the

[8] Johnson entertained a very high idea of the varied learning and science necessarily connected with the character of an accomplished physician, and often affirmed of the physicians of this island, that "they did more good to mankind without a prospect of reward, than any profession of men whatever." His friendship for Dr. Bathurst, and the most eminent men in the medical line of his day, is well known. See an epistle to Dr. Percival, developing the wide field of knowledge over which a physician should expiate, prefixed to Observations on the Literature of the Primitive Christian Writers. Ed.

common methods; he became a fellow of the Royal Society; he obtained a degree at Cambridge; and was admitted into the College of Physicians; he wrote little poetry, but published, from time to time, medical essays and observations; he became physician to St. Thomas's hospital; he read the Gulstonian lectures in anatomy; but began to give, for the Crounian lecture, a history of the revival of learning, from which he soon desisted; and, in conversation, he very eagerly forced himself into notice by an ambitious ostentation of elegance and literature.

His Discourse on the Dysentery, 1764, was considered as a very conspicuous specimen of Latinity, which entitled him to the same height of place among the scholars as he possessed before among the wits; and he might, perhaps, have risen to a greater elevation of character, but that his studies were ended with his life, by a putrid fever, June 23, 1770, in the forty-ninth year of his age[t].

Akenside is to be considered as a didactick and lyrick poet. His great work is the Pleasures of Imagination; a performance which, published as it was, at the age of twenty-three, raised expectations that were not very amply satisfied. It has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions, of a young mind stored with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them.

[t] A most curious and original character of Akenside is given by George Hardinge, in vol. viii. of Nichols's Literary Anecdotes. Ed.

With the philosophical or religious tenets of the author, I have nothing to do; my business is with his poetry. The subject is well chosen, as it includes all images that can strike or please, and thus comprises every species of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illustrations; and it is not easy, in such exuberance of matter, to find the middle point between penury and satiety. The parts seem artificially disposed, with sufficient coherence, so as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general design.

His images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression, that they are hidden, like Butler's Moon, by a "veil of light;" they are forms fantastically lost under superfluity of dress. "Pars minima est ipsa puella sui." The words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind, and settles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay diffusion, sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted; but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing.

To his versification, justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is, perhaps, superiour to any other writer of blank verse: his flow is smooth, and his pauses are musical; but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intertexture of compli-

cated clauses, and, as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered.

The exemption which blank verse affords from the necessity of closing the sense with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into such self-indulgence, that they pile image upon image, ornament upon ornament, and are not easily persuaded to close the sense at all. Blank verse will, therefore, I fear, be too often found in description exuberant, in argument loquacious, and in narration tiresome.

His diction is certainly poetical as it is not prosaick, and elegant as it is not vulgar. He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of disgust than most of his brethren of the blank song. He rarely either recalls old phrases, or twists his metre into harsh inversions. The sense, however, of his words is strained, when "he views the Ganges from Alpine heights;" that is, from mountains like the Alps: and the pedant surely intrudes, (but when was blank verse without pedantry?) when he tells how "planets *absolve* the stated round of time."

It is generally known to the readers of poetry that he intended to revise and augment this work, but died before he had completed his design. The reformed work as he left it, and the additions which he had made, are very properly retained in the late collection. He seems to have somewhat contracted his diffusion; but I know not whether he has gained in closeness what he has lost in splendour. In the additional book, the Tale of Solon is too long.

One great defect of his poem is very properly

censured by Mr. Walker, unless it may be said, in his defence, that what he has omitted was not properly in his plan. "His picture of man is grand and beautiful, but unfinished. The immortality of the soul, which is the natural consequence of the appetites and powers she is invested with, is scarcely once hinted throughout the poem. This deficiency is amply supplied by the masterly pencil of Dr. Young; who, like a good philosopher, has invincibly proved the immortality of man, from the grandeur of his conceptions, and the meanness and misery of his state; for this reason, a few passages are selected from the Night Thoughts, which, with those from Akenside, seem to form a complete view of the powers, situation, and end of man." Exercises for Improvement in Elocution, p. 66.

His other poems are now to be considered; but a short consideration will despatch them. It is not easy to guess why he addicted himself so diligently to lyrick poetry, having neither the ease and airiness of the lighter, nor the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former powers seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant. Yet such was his love of lyricks, that, having written, with great vigour and poignancy, his Epistle to Curio, he transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be said; the sentiments commonly want force, nature, or nov-

elty; the diction is sometimes harsh and uncouth, the stanzas ill-constructed and unpleasant, and the rhymes dissonant, or unskilfully disposed, too distant from each other, or arranged with too little regard to established use, and, therefore, perplexing to the ear, which, in a short composition, has not time to grow familiar with an innovation.

To examine such compositions singly cannot be required; they have, doubtless, brighter and darker parts; but, when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared: for to what use can the work be criticised that will not be read?

GRAY

THOMAS GRAY, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eton, under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, then assistant to Dr. George; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse, in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but Gray seems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived sullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the common law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whose friendship he had gained at Eton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's letters contain a very pleasing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendships are easily dissolved: at Florence they quarrelled and parted; and Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look, however, without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough, in their association with

superiours, to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel; and the rest of their travels was, doubtless, more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.

He returned to England in September, 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father, who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune, that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He, therefore, retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became bachelor of civil law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or professing to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which he shows in his letters, and in the Ode to May, which Mr. Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of Agrippina, a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgment of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that Agrippina was never finished.

In this year, 1742, Gray seems first to have ap-

plied himself seriously to poetry; for in this year were produced the Ode to Spring, his Prospect of Eton, and his Ode to Adversity. He began likewise a Latin poem, De Principiis Cogitandi.

It may be collected from the narrative of Mr. Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry: perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design; for, though there is at present some embarrassment in his phrase, and some harshness in his lyrick numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very few possess; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would quickly have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself; when Mr. Mason, being elected fellow of Pembroke hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger, and the coldness of a critick.

In this retirement he wrote, 1747, an ode on the Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat; and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance, on Government and Education, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production, 1750, was his far-famed Elegy in the Church-yard, which, finding its way

into a magazine, first, I believe, made him known to the publick.

An invitation from lady Cobham, about this time, gave occasion to an odd composition called a Long Story, which adds little to Gray's character.

Several of his pieces were published, 1753, with designs by Mr. Bentley; and, that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.

Some time afterwards, 1756, some young men of the college, whose chambers were near his, diverted themselves with disturbing him by frequent and troublesome noises, and, as is said, by pranks yet more offensive and contemptuous. This insolence, having endured it awhile, he represented to the governours of the society, among whom, perhaps, he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke hall.

In 1757 he published the Progress of Poetry, and the Bard, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them, though Warburton said that they were understood as well as the works of Milton and Shakespeare, which it is the fashion to admire. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them

from neglect; and, in a short time, many were content to be shown beauties which they could not see.

Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

His curiosity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing; and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on Oblivion and Obscurity, in which his lyrick performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the professor of modern history at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, "cockered and spirited up," till he asked it of lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal; and the place was given to Mr. Brocket, the tutor of sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook, 1765, a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant; for, as his comprehension was ample, his curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal college at Aberdeen offered him the degree of doctor of laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuse.

What he had formerly solicited in vain was at last given him without solicitation. The professorship of history became again vacant, and he received, 1768, an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglect of duty, and appeasing his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a resolution which he believed himself to have made of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited, 1769, Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration, wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and, yielding to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which, July 30, 1771, terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a letter written to my friend Mr. Boswell, by the reverend Mr. Temple, rector of St. Gluvias, in Cornwall; and am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to believe it true.

"Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history,

both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysicks, morals, politicks, made a principal part of his study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiours in science. He also had, in some degree, that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve: though he seemed to value others chiefly according to the progress that they had made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be considered himself merely as a man of letters; and, though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be said, what signifies so much knowledge, when it produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few poems? But let it be considered, that Mr. Gray was, to others at least, innocently employed, to himself certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he was every day making some new acquisition in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strength-

ened; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask; and he was taught to consider every thing as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that state wherein God hath placed us."

To this character Mr. Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most "before those whom he did not wish to please;" and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me from the slight inspection of his letters, in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgment cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all; but that he was fastidious and hard to please. His contempt, however, is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon skepticism and infidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

"You say you cannot conceive how lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to

take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter; for a new road has become an old one."

Mr. Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that, though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion, not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastick foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and virtue wishes him to have been superiour.

Gray's poetry is now to be considered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on Spring has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has, of late, arisen a practice of giving to adjectives derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the *cultured* plain, the *daisied* bank; but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar

like Gray, the *honied* spring. The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem on the Cat was, doubtless, by its author, considered as a trifle; but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza, "the azure flowers that blow" show resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. Selima, the cat, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is no good use made of it when it is done: for of the two lines,

> What female heart can gold despise?
> What cat's averse to fish?

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that "a favourite has no friend;" but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if *what glistered* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The Prospect of Eton College suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself[u]. His epithet, "buxom health,"

[u] We shall, in comparison with this criticism, quote a passage from Rasselas, and deduce no inference: "As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes on the river that flowed before her: answer, said she, great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocation of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me, if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint." Ed.

is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use; finding in Dryden "honey redolent of spring," an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making "gales" to be "redolent of joy and youth."

Of the Ode on Adversity, the hint was, at first, taken from "O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium;" but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not, by slight objections, violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the *wonderful wonder of wonders*, the two sister odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and, therefore, would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the Progress of Poetry.

Gray seems, in his rapture, to confound the images of "spreading sound" and "running water." A "stream of musick," may be allowed; but where does "musick," however "smooth and strong," after having visited the "verdant vales, roll down the steep amain," so as that "rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar?" If this be said of musick, it is nonsense; if it be said of water, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars' car and Jove's

eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a schoolboy to his commonplaces.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's "velvet green" has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from nature enobles art: an epithet or metaphor drawn from art degrades nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. "Many-twinkling" was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say "many-spotted," but scarcely "many-spotting." This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of poetry; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not arise from the premises. The caverns of the north and the plains of Chili are not the residences of "Glory and generous shame." But that poetry and virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with "Delphi," and "Egean" and "Ilissus," and "Meander," and "hallowed fountains," and "solemn sound;" but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away. His position is at last false: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our first school of poetry, Italy was overrun by "tyrant power" and "coward vice:"

nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily: the real effects of this poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superiour to its original; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in the Bard more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. Incredulus odi.

To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it

has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that the Bard promotes any truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and, consequently, before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza, the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of Johnny Armstrong:

> Is there ever a man in all Scotland.

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, "ruin, ruthless, helm or hauberk," are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza, the Bard is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that "Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main," and that "Modred made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head," attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *windingsheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the Northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the act of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of slaughtered bards by a fiction

outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to "weave the warp, and weave the woof," perhaps, with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, "give ample room and verge enough[v]. "He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how *towers* are *fed.* But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed, that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had without expense of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike, rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. "Double, double, toil and trouble." He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature[w].

[v] I have a soul, that like an *ample* shield
Can take in all; and *verge enough* for more. Dryden's Sebastian.

[w] Lord Orford used to assert, that Gray "never wrote any thing easily, but things of humour;" and added, that humour was his natural and original turn.

For a full examination of Johnson's strange and capricious strictures

To say that he has no beauties, would be unjust; a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill-directed.

His translations of Northern and Welsh poetry deserve praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his Elegy I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for, by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The Church yard abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning "Yet even these bones," are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

on the poetry of Gray, we, with much satisfaction, refer our readers to the life prefixed to, and the notes that accompany, an elegant edition of Gray's works, 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1825. Much that is both elegant and useful will be found in that publication. Ed.

GEORGE LYTTELTON, the son of sir Thomas Lyttelton, of Hagley, in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his schoolfellows.

From Eton he went to Christ-church, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the publick in a poem on Blenheim.

He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His Progress of Love, and his Persian Letters, were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty, which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.

He staid not long at Oxford; for, in 1728, he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned, he obtained a seat in parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most eager opponents of sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was a commissioner of the admiralty, always voted with the court.

For many years the name of George Lyttelton was seen in every account of every debate in the house of commons. He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for

petitioning the king to remove Walpole. His zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and, when Walpole was at last hunted from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttelton from the secret committee.

The prince of Wales, being, 1737, driven from St. James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttelton became his secretary, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He persuaded his master, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-secretary, with two hundred pounds; and Thomson had a pension of one hundred pounds a year. For Thomson, Lyttelton always retained his kindness, and was able, at last, to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called the Trial of Selim; for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes, that were at last disappointed.

Lyttelton now stood in the first rank of opposition; and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house, imputed to him, as a crime, his intimacy with a lampooner so unjust and licentious. Lyttelton supported his friend; and replied, that he

thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.

While he was thus conspicuous, he married, 1741, Miss Lucy Fortescue, of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity; but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards; and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not, however, condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow; for, after awhile, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of sir Robert Rich: but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made, 1744, one of the lords of the treasury; and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politicks did not, however, so much engage him, as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of christianity; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true; and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach, 1747, by Observations on the

Conversion of St. Paul; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted:

"I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irresistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours, and grant that I may be found worthy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that happiness which I don't doubt he will bountifully bestow upon you. In the mean time, I shall never cease glorifying God, for having endowed you with such useful talents, and giving me so good a son.

"Your affectionate father,

"Thomas Lyttelton."

A few years afterwards, 1751, by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large estate, which, though, perhaps, he did not augment, he was careful to adorn by a house of great elegance and expense, and by much attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his activity in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made, in time, 1754, cofferer and privy counsellor: this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the ex-

chequer; an office, however, that required some qualifications which he soon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiosity led him into Wales; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he seems to have deserved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and fame, he was never persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities; attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground: at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

About this time Lyttelton published his Dialogues of the Dead, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study: rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and, when they have met, they too often part without any conclusion. He has copied Fénélon more than Fontenelle.

When they were first published, they were kindly commended by the Critical Reviewers; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned, in a note which I have read, acknowledgments which can never be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the in-

auspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, sir George Lyttelton, losing, with the rest, his employment, was recompensed with a peerage; and rested from political turbulence in the house of lords.

His last literary production was his History of Henry the second, elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the press were at the expense of the author, whose ambitious accuracy is known to have cost him, at least, a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764; a second edition of them in 1767; a third edition in 1768; and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without considerable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to persuade Lyttelton, as he had persuaded himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was employed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of Henry the second. The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the pointer, he probably gave the rest away; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When time brought the history to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the style of doctor. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done; for to the doctor's edition is appended, what the world had hardly seen before, a list of errours in nineteen pages.

But to politicks and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man; he had a slender, uncompacted frame, and a meagre face: he lasted, however, sixty years, and was then seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician[x], which will spare me the task of his moral character.

"On Sunday evening the symptoms of his lordship's disorder, which for a week past had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance, and his lordship believed himself to be a dying man. From this time he suffered by restlessness rather than pain; though his nerves were apparently much fluttered, his mental faculties never seemed stronger, when he was thoroughly awake.

"His lordship's bilious and hepatick complaints seemed alone not equal to the expected mournful event; his long want of sleep, whether the consequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is more probable, of causes of a different kind, ac-

[x] Dr. Johnstone, of Kidderminster.

counts for his loss of strength, and for his death, very sufficiently.

"Though his lordship wished his approaching dissolution not to be lingering, he waited for it with resignation. He said, 'It is a folly, a keeping me in misery, now to attempt to prolong life;' yet he was easily persuaded, for the satisfaction of others, to do or take any thing thought proper for him. On Saturday he had been remarkably better, and we were not without some hopes of his recovery.

"On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon, his lordship sent for me, and said he felt a great hurry, and wished to have a little conversation with me, in order to divert it. He then proceeded to open the fountain of that heart, from whence goodness had so long flowed as from a copious spring. 'Doctor,' said he, 'you shall be my confessor: when I first set out in the world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me; but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and it is the ground of my future hopes. I have erred and sinned; but have repented, and never indulged any vitious habit. In politicks, and publick life, I have made publick good the rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels which I did not at the time think the best. I have seen that I was sometimes in the

wrong; but I did not err designedly. I have endeavoured, in private life, to do all the good in my power, and never for a moment could indulge malicious or unjust designs upon any person whatsoever.'

"At another time he said, 'I must leave my soul in the same state it was in before this illness; I find this a very inconvenient time for solicitude about any thing.'

"On the evening, when the symptoms of death came on, he said, 'I shall die; but it will not be your fault.' When lord and lady Valentia came to see his lordship, he gave them his solemn benediction, and said, 'Be good, be virtuous, my lord; you must come to this.' Thus he continued giving his dying benediction to all around him. On Monday morning a lucid interval gave some small hopes, but these vanished in the evening; and he continued dying, but with very little uneasiness, till Tuesday morning, August 22, when, between seven and eight o'clock, he expired, almost without a groan."

His lordship was buried at Hagley; and the following inscription is cut on the side of his lady's monument:

This unadorned stone was placed here
by the particular desire and express
directions of the right honourable
George Lord Lyttelton,
Who died August 22, 1773, aged 64.

Lord Lyttelton's poems are the works of a man of literature and judgment, devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be

despised, and little to be admired. Of his Progress of Love, it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in Blenheim has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether songs or epigrams, are sometimes sprightly and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom elevates or surprises. But from this censure ought to be excepted his Advice to Belinda, which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shows a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.

PLAN OF AN ENGLISH DICTIONARY

PLAN OF AN ENGLISH DICTIONARY

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PHILIP DORMER,
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD,

One of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

MY LORD,

WHEN first I undertook to write an English Dictionary, I had no expectation of any higher patronage than that of the proprietors of the copy, nor prospect of any other advantage than the price of my labour. I knew that the work in which I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the blind, as the proper toil of artless industry; a task that requires neither the light of learning, nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience, and beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution.

Whether this opinion, so long transmitted, and so widely propagated, had its beginning from truth and nature, or from accident and prejudice; whether it be decreed by the authority of reason or the tyranny of ignorance, that, of all the candidates for literary praise, the unhappy lexicographer holds the lowest place, neither vanity nor interest incited me to inquire. It appeared that the province allotted me was, of all the regions of learning, generally confessed to be the least delightful, that it was believed to produce neither fruits nor flowers; and that, after

a long and laborious cultivation, not even the barren laurel[j] had been found upon it.

Yet on this province, my Lord, I entered, with the pleasing hope, that, as it was low, it likewise would be safe. I was drawn forward with the prospect of employment, which, though not splendid, would be useful; and which, though it could not make my life envied, would keep it innocent; which would awaken no passion, engage me in no contention, nor throw in my way any temptation to disturb the quiet of others by censure, or my own by flattery.

I had read, indeed, of times, in which princes and statesmen thought it part of their honour to promote the improvement of their native tongues; and in which dictionaries were written under the protection of greatness. To the patrons of such undertakings I willingly paid the homage of believing that they, who were thus solicitous for the perpetuity of their language, had reason to expect that their actions would be celebrated by posterity, and that the eloquence which they promoted would be employed in their praise. But I considered such acts of beneficence as prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation; and, content with the terms that I had stipulated, had not suffered my imagination to flatter me with any other encouragement, when I found that my design had been

[j] Lord Orrery, in a letter to Dr. Birch, mentions this as one of the very few inaccuracies in this admirable address, the *laurel* not being *barren* in any sense, but bearing fruits and flowers. Boswell's Life, vol. i. p. 160. Edit. 1804.

thought by your Lordship of importance sufficient to attract your favour.

How far this unexpected distinction can be rated among the happy incidents of life, I am not yet able to determine. Its first effect has been to make me anxious, lest it should fix the attention of the publick too much upon me; and, as it once happened to an epick poet of France, by raising the reputation of the attempt, obstruct the reception of the work. I imagine what the world will expect from a scheme, prosecuted under your Lordship's influence; and I know that expectation, when her wings are once expanded, easily reaches heights which performance never will attain; and when she has mounted the summit of perfection, derides her follower, who dies in the pursuit.

Not, therefore, to raise expectation, but to repress it, I here lay before your Lordship the plan of my undertaking, that more may not be demanded than I intend; and that, before it is too far advanced to be thrown into a new method, I may be advertised of its defects or superfluities. Such informations I may justly hope, from the emulation with which those, who desire the praise of elegance or discernment, must contend in the promotion of a design that you, my Lord, have not thought unworthy to share your attention with treaties and with wars.

In the first attempt to methodise my ideas I found a difficulty, which extended itself to the whole work. It was not easy to determine by what

rule of distinction the words of this dictionary were to be chosen. The chief intent of it is to preserve the purity, and ascertain the meaning of our English idiom; and this seems to require nothing more than that our language be considered, so far as it is our own; that the words and phrases used in the general intercourse of life, or found in the works of those whom we commonly style polite writers, be selected, without including the terms of particular professions; since, with the arts to which they relate, they are generally derived from other nations, and are very often the same in all the languages of this part of the world. This is, perhaps, the exact and pure idea of a grammatical dictionary; but in lexicography, as in other arts, naked science is too delicate for the purposes of life. The value of a work must be estimated by its use; it is not enough that a dictionary delights the critick, unless, at the same time, it instructs the learner; as it is to little purpose that an engine amuses the philosopher by the subtilty of its mechanism, if it requires so much knowledge in its application as to be of no advantage to the common workman.

The title which I prefix to my work has long conveyed a very miscellaneous idea, and they that take a dictionary into their hands, have been accustomed to expect from it a solution of almost every difficulty. If foreign words, therefore, were rejected, it could be little regarded, except by criticks, or those who aspire to criticism; and however it might enlighten those that write, would be all darkness to

them that only read. The unlearned much oftener consult their dictionaries for the meaning of words, than for their structures or formations; and the words that most want explanation are generally terms of art; which, therefore, experience has taught my predecessors to spread with a kind of pompous luxuriance over their productions.

The academicians of France, indeed, rejected terms of science in their first essay, but found afterwards a necessity of relaxing the rigour of their determination; and, though they would not naturalize them at once by a single act, permitted them by degrees to settle themselves among the natives, with little opposition; and it would surely be no proof of judgment to imitate them in an errour which they have now retracted, and deprive the book of its chief use, by scrupulous distinctions.

Of such words, however, all are not equally to be considered as parts of our language; for some of them are naturalized and incorporated; but others still continue aliens, and are rather auxiliaries than subjects. This naturalization is produced either by an admission into common speech, in some metaphorical signification, which is the acquisition of a kind of property among us; as we say, the *zenith* of advancement, the *meridian* of life, the *cynosure*[k] of neighbouring eyes; or it is the consequence of long intermixture and frequent use, by which the ear is accustomed to the sound of words, till their original is forgotten, as in *equator*, *satellites*; or of the change

[k] Milton.

of a foreign to an English termination, and a conformity to the laws of the speech into which they are adopted; as in *category*, *cachexy*, *peripneumony*.

Of those which still continue in the state of aliens, and have made no approaches towards assimilation, some seem necessary to be retained, because the purchasers of the Dictionary will expect to find them. Such are many words in the common law, as *capias*, *habeas corpus*, *præmunire*, *nisi prius:* such are some terms of controversial divinity, as *hypostasis;* and of physick, as the names of diseases; and, in general, all terms which can be found in books not written professedly upon particular arts, or can be supposed necessary to those who do not regularly study them. Thus, when a reader not skilled in physick happens in Milton upon this line,

——— pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,

he will, with equal expectation, look into his dictionary for the word *marasmus*, as for *atrophy*, or *pestilence;* and will have reason to complain if he does not find it.

It seems necessary to the completion of a dictionary, designed not merely for criticks, but for popular use, that it should comprise, in some degree, the peculiar words of every profession; that the terms of war and navigation should be inserted, so far as they can be required by readers of travels, and of history; and those of law, merchandise, and mechanical trades, so far as they can be supposed useful in the occurrences of common life.

But there ought, however, to be some distinction made between the different classes of words; and, therefore, it will be proper to print those which are incorporated into the language in the usual character, and those which are still to be considered as foreign, in the Italick letter.

Another question may arise with regard to appellatives, or the names of species. It seems of no great use to set down the words *horse*, *dog*, *cat*, *willow*, *alder*, *daisy*, *rose*, and a thousand others, of which it will be hard to give an explanation, not more obscure than the word itself. Yet it is to be considered, that, if the names of animals be inserted, we must admit those which are more known, as well as those with which we are, by accident, less acquainted; and if they are all rejected, how will the reader be relieved from difficulties produced by allusions to the crocodile, the chameleon, the ichneumon, and the hyæna? If no plants are to be mentioned, the most pleasing part of nature will be excluded, and many beautiful epithets be unexplained. If only those which are less known are to be mentioned, who shall fix the limits of the reader's learning? The importance of such explications appears from the mistakes which the want of them has occasioned: had Shakespeare had a dictionary of this kind, he had not made the *woodbine* entwine the *honeysuckle;* nor would Milton, with such assistance, have disposed so improperly of his *ellops* and his *scorpion.*

Besides, as such words, like others, require that

their accents should be settled, their sounds ascertained, and their etymologies deduced, they cannot be properly omitted in the Dictionary. And though the explanations of some may be censured as trivial, because they are almost universally understood, and those of others as unnecessary, because they will seldom occur, yet it seems not proper to omit them; since it is rather to be wished that many readers should find more than they expect, than that one should miss what he might hope to find.

When all the words are selected and arranged, the first part of the work to be considered is the orthography, which was long vague and uncertain; which at last, when its fluctuation ceased, was in many cases settled but by accident; and in which, according to your Lordship's observation, there is still great uncertainty among the best criticks: nor is it easy to state a rule by which we may decide between custom and reason, or between the equiponderant authorities of writers alike eminent for judgment and accuracy.

The great orthographical contest has long subsisted between etymology and pronunciation. It has been demanded, on one hand, that men should write as they speak; but, as it has been shown that this conformity never was attained in any language, and that it is not more easy to persuade men to agree exactly in speaking than in writing, it may be asked, with equal propriety, why men do not rather speak as they write. In France, where this controversy was at its greatest height, neither party, however ardent,

durst adhere steadily to their own rule; the etymologist was often forced to spell with the people; and the advocate for the authority of pronunciation found it sometimes deviating so capriciously from the received use of writing, that he was constrained to comply with the rule of his adversaries, lest he should lose the end by the means, and be left alone by following the crowd.

When a question of orthography is dubious, that practice has, in my opinion, a claim to preference which preserves the greatest number of radical letters, or seems most to comply with the general custom of our language. But the chief rule which I propose to follow is, to make no innovation without a reason sufficient to balance the inconvenience of change; and such reasons I do not expect often to find. All change is of itself an evil, which ought not to be hazarded but for evident advantage; and as inconstancy is in every case a mark of weakness, it will add nothing to the reputation of our tongue. There are, indeed, some who despise the inconveniencies of confusion, who seem to take pleasure in departing from custom, and to think alteration desirable for its own sake; and the reformation of our orthography, which these writers have attempted, should not pass without its due honours, but that I suppose they hold singularity its own reward, or may dread the fascination of lavish praise.

The present usage of spelling, where the present usage can be distinguished, will, therefore, in this

work, be generally followed; yet there will be often occasion to observe, that it is in itself inaccurate, and tolerated rather than chosen; particularly when, by the change of one letter or more, the meaning of a word is obscured, as in *farrier* for *ferrier*, as it was formerly written, from *ferrum*, or *fer;* in *gibberish* for *gebrish*, the jargon of *Geber*, and his chymical followers, understood by none but their own tribe. It will be likewise sometimes proper to trace back the orthography of different ages, and show by what gradations the word departed from its original.

Closely connected with orthography is pronunciation, the stability of which is of great importance to the duration of a language, because the first change will naturally begin by corruptions in the living speech. The want of certain rules for the pronunciation of former ages, has made us wholly ignorant of the metrical art of our ancient poets; and since those who study their sentiments regret the loss of their numbers, it is surely time to provide that the harmony of the moderns may be more permanent.

A new pronunciation will make almost a new speech; and, therefore, since one great end of this undertaking is to fix the English language, care will be taken to determine the accentuation of all polysyllables by proper authorities, as it is one of those capricious phænomena which cannot be easily reduced to rules. Thus there is no antecedent reason for difference of accent in the two words *dolorous*

and *sonorous;* yet of the one Milton gives the sound in this line,

He pass'd o'er many a region *dolorous;*

and that of the other in this,

Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.

It may be likewise proper to remark metrical licenses, such as contractions, *generous, gen'rous; reverend, rev'rend;* and coalitions, as *region, question.*

But still it is more necessary to fix the pronunciation of monosyllables, by placing with them words of correspondent sound, that one may guard the other against the danger of that variation, which, to some of the most common, has already happened; so that the words *wound* and *wind,* as they are now frequently pronounced, will not rhyme to *sound* and *mind.* It is to be remarked, that many words written alike are differently pronounced, as *flow,* and *brow:* which may be thus registered, *flow, woe; brow, now;* or of which the exemplification may be generally given by a distich: thus the words *tear,* or lacerate and *tear,* the water of the eye, have the same letters, but may be distinguished thus, *tear, dare; tear, peer.*

Some words have two sounds, which may be equally admitted, as being equally defensible by authority. Thus *great* is differently used:

For Swift and him despised the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and *great.* POPE.

As if misfortune made the throne her seat,
And none could be unhappy but the *great.* ROWE.

The care of such minute particulars may be censured as trifling; but these particulars have not been thought unworthy of attention in more polished languages.

The accuracy of the French, in stating the sounds of their letters, is well known; and, among the Italians, Crescembeni has not thought it unnecessary to inform his countrymen of the words which, in compliance with different rhymes, are allowed to be differently spelt, and of which the number is now so fixed, that no modern poet is suffered to increase it.

When the orthography and pronunciation are adjusted, the etymology or derivation is next to be considered, and the words are to be distinguished according to the different classes, whether simple, as *day*, *light*, or compound, as *day-light;* whether primitive, as, to *act*, or derivative, as *action*, *actionable; active*, *activity*. This will much facilitate the attainment of our language, which now stands in our dictionaries a confused heap of words without dependence, and without relation.

When this part of the work is performed, it will be necessary to inquire how our primitives are to be deduced from foreign languages, which may be often very successfully performed by the assistance of our own etymologists. This search will give occasion to many curious disquisitions, and sometimes, perhaps, to conjectures, which to readers unacquainted with this kind of study, cannot but appear improbable and capricious. But it may be reasonably imagined, that what is so much in the power of men as lan-

guage, will very often be capriciously conducted. Nor are these disquisitions and conjectures to be considered altogether as wanton sports of wit, or vain shows of learning; our language is well known not to be primitive or self-originated, but to have adopted words of every generation, and, either for the supply of its necessities, or the increase of its copiousness, to have received additions from very distant regions; so that in search of the progenitors of our speech, we may wander from the tropick to the frozen zone, and find some in the valleys of Palestine, and some upon the rocks of Norway.

Beside the derivation of particular words, there is likewise an etymology of phrases. Expressions are often taken from other languages; some apparently, as to *run a risk*, *courir un risque;* and some even when we do not seem to borrow their words; thus, to *bring about*, or accomplish, appears an English phrase, but in reality our native word *about* has no such import, and is only a French expression, of which we have an example in the common phrase *venir à bout d'une affaire.*

In exhibiting the descent of our language, our etymologists seem to have been too lavish of their learning, having traced almost every word through various tongues, only to show what was shown sufficiently by the first derivation. This practice is of great use in synoptical lexicons, where mutilated and doubtful languages are explained by their affinity to others more certain and extensive, but is generally superfluous in English etymologies. When the word

is easily deduced from a Saxon original, I shall not often inquire further, since we know not the parent of the Saxon dialect; but when it is borrowed from the French, I shall show whence the French is apparently derived. Where a Saxon root cannot be found, the defect may be supplied from kindred languages, which will be generally furnished with much liberality by the writers of our glossaries; writers who deserve often the highest praise, both of judgment and industry, and may expect at least to be mentioned with honour by me, whom they have freed from the greatest part of a very laborious work, and on whom they have imposed, at worst, only the easy task of rejecting superfluities.

By tracing in this manner every word to its original, and not admitting, but with great caution, any of which no original can be found, we shall secure our language from being overrun with *cant*, from being crowded with low terms, the spawn of folly or affectation, which arise from no just principles of speech, and of which, therefore, no legitimate derivation can be shown.

When the etymology is thus adjusted, the analogy of our language is next to be considered; when we have discovered whence our words are derived, we are to examine by what rules they are governed, and how they are inflected through their various terminations. The terminations of the English are few, but those few have hitherto remained unregarded by the writers of our dictionaries. Our substantives are declined only by the plural termination, our

adjectives admit no variation but in the degrees of comparison, and our verbs are conjugated by auxiliary words, and are only changed in the preter tense.

To our language may be, with great justness, applied the observation of Quintilian, that speech was not formed by an analogy sent from heaven. It did not descend to us in a state of uniformity and perfection, but was produced by necessity, and enlarged by accident, and is, therefore, composed of dissimilar parts, thrown together by negligence, by affectation, by learning or by ignorance.

Our inflections, therefore, are by no means constant, but admit of numberless irregularities, which in this Dictionary will be diligently noted. Thus *fox* makes in the plural *foxes*, but *ox* makes *oxen*. *Sheep* is the same in both numbers. Adjectives are sometimes compared by changing the last syllable, as *proud*, *prouder*, *proudest;* and sometimes by particles prefixed, as *ambitious*, *more* ambitious, *most* ambitious. The forms of our verbs are subject to great variety; some end their preter tense in *ed*, as *love*, I *loved*, I have *loved;* which may be called the regular form, and is followed by most of our verbs of southern original. But many depart from this rule, without agreeing in any other, as I *shake*, I *shook*, I have *shaken* or *shook*, as it is sometimes written in poetry; I *make*, I *made*, I have *made;* I *bring*, I *brought;* I *wring*, I *wrung;* and many others, which, as they cannot be reduced to rules, must be learned from the dictionary rather than the grammar.

The verbs are likewise to be distinguished according to their qualities, as actives from neuters; the neglect of which has already introduced some barbarities in our conversation, which, if not obviated by just animadversions, may in time creep into our writings.

Thus, my Lord, will our language be laid down, distinct in its minutest subdivisions, and resolved into its elemental principles. And who upon this survey can forbear to wish, that these fundamental atoms of our speech might obtain the firmness and immutability of the primogenial and constituent particles of matter, that they might retain their substance while they alter their appearance, and be varied and compounded, yet not destroyed?

But this is a privilege which words are scarcely to expect: for, like their author, when they are not gaining strength, they are generally losing it. Though art may sometimes prolong their duration, it will rarely give them perpetuity; and their changes will be almost always informing us, that language is the work of man, of a being from whom permanence and stability cannot be derived.

Words having been hitherto considered as separate and unconnected, are now to be likewise examined as they are ranged in their various relations to others by the rules of syntax or construction, to which I do not know that any regard has been yet shown in English dictionaries, and in which the grammarians can give little assistance. The syntax of this language is too inconstant to be reduced to rules, and can be

only learned by the distinct consideration of particular words as they are used by the best authors. Thus, we say, according to the present modes of speech. The soldier died *of* his wounds, and the sailor perished *with* hunger; and every man acquainted with our language would be offended with a change of these particles, which yet seem originally assigned by chance, there being no reason to be drawn from grammar why a man may not, with equal propriety, be said to die *with* a wound or perish *of* hunger.

Our syntax, therefore, is not to be taught by general rules, but by special precedents; and in examining whether Addison has been with justice accused of a solecism in this passage,

> The poor inhabitant——
> Starves in the midst of nature's bounty curst,
> And in the loaden vineyard *dies for thirst*——

it is not in our power to have recourse to any established laws of speech; but we must remark how the writers of former ages have used the same word, and consider whether he can be acquitted of impropriety, upon the testimony of Davies, given in his favour by a similar passage:

> She loaths the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,
> And shuns it still, although *for thirst she dye.*

When the construction of a word is explained, it is necessary to pursue it through its train of phraseology, through those forms where it is used in a manner peculiar to our language, or in senses not to be comprised in the general explanations; as from

the verb *make* arise these phrases, to *make love*, to *make an end*, to *make way;* as, he *made way* for his followers, the ship *made way* before the wind; to *make a bed*, to *make merry*, to *make a mock*, to *make presents*, to *make a doubt*, to *make out an assertion*, to *make good* a breach, to *make good* a cause, to *make nothing* of an attempt, to *make lamentation*, to *make a merit*, and many others which will occur in reading with that view, and which only their frequency hinders from being generally remarked.

The great labour is yet to come, the labour of interpreting these words and phrases with brevity, fulness, and perspicuity; a task of which the extent and intricacy is sufficiently shown by the miscarriage of those who have generally attempted it. This difficulty is increased by the necessity of explaining the words in the same language; for there is often only one word for one idea; and though it be easy to translate the words *bright*, *sweet*, *salt*, *bitter*, into another language, it is not easy to explain them.

With regard to the interpretation, many other questions have required consideration. It was some time doubted whether it be necessary to explain the things implied by particular words; as under the term *baronet*, whether, instead of this explanation, *a title of honour next in degree to that of baron*, it would be better to mention more particularly the creation, privileges, and rank of baronets; and whether, under the word *barometer*, instead of being satisfied with observing that it is *an instrument to discover the weight of the air*, it would be fit to spend

a few lines upon its invention, construction, and principles. It is not to be expected, that with the explanation of the one the herald should be satisfied, or the philosopher with that of the other; but since it will be required by common readers, that the explications should be sufficient for common use; and since, without some attention to such demands, the Dictionary cannot become generally valuable, I have determined to consult the best writers for explanations real as well as verbal; and, perhaps, I may at last have reason to say, after one of the augmenters of Furetier, that my book is more learned than its author.

In explaining the general and popular language, it seems necessary to sort the several senses of each word, and to exhibit first its natural and primitive signification; as,

To *arrive*, to reach the shore in a voyage: he *arrived* at a safe harbour.

Then to give its consequential meaning, to *arrive*, to reach any place, whether by land or sea; as, he *arrived* at his country-seat.

Then its metaphorical sense, to obtain any thing desired; as, he *arrived* at a peerage.

Then to mention any observation that arises from the comparison of one meaning with another; as, it may be remarked of the word *arrive*, that, in consequence of its original and etymological sense, it cannot be properly applied but to words signifying something desirable; thus we say, a man *arrived* at happiness; but cannot say, without a mixture of irony, he *arrived* at misery.

Ground, the earth, generally as opposed to the air or water. He swam till he reached *ground*. The bird fell to the *ground*.

Then follows the accidental or consequential signification in which *ground* implies any thing that lies under another; as, he laid colours upon a rough *ground*. The silk had blue flowers on a red *ground*.

Then the remoter or metaphorical signification; as, the *ground* of his opinion was a false computation. The *ground* of his work was his father's manuscript.

After having gone through the natural and figurative senses, it will be proper to subjoin the poetical sense of each word, where it differs from that which is in common use; as *wanton*, applied to any thing of which the motion is irregular without terrour; as,

In *wanton* ringlets curl'd her hair.

To the poetical sense may succeed the familiar; as of *toast*, used to imply the person whose health is drunk; as,

The wise man's passion, and the vain man's *toast*. POPE.

The familiar may be followed by the burlesque; as of *mellow*, applied to good fellowship:

In all thy humours, whether grave or *mellow*. ADDISON.

Or of *bite*, used for *cheat*:

——More a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was *bit*. POPE.

And, lastly, may be produced the peculiar sense, in which a word is found in any great author: as

faculties, in Shakespeare, signifies the powers of authority:

> ——This Duncan
> Has borne his *faculties* so meek, has been
> So clear in his great office, that, &c.

The signification of adjectives may be often ascertained by uniting them to substantives; as, *simple swain*, *simple sheep*. Sometimes the sense of a substantive may be elucidated by the epithets annexed to it in good authors; as, the *boundless ocean*, the *open lawns*: and where such advantage can be gained by a short quotation, it is not to be omitted.

The difference of signification in words generally accounted synonymous, ought to be carefully observed; as in *pride*, *haughtiness*, *arrogance*: and the strict and critical meaning ought to be distinguished from that which is loose and popular; as in the word *perfection*, which, though in its philosophical and exact sense it can be of little use among human beings, is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work, *the perfection of a language*, and, with a little more licentiousness, might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a dictionary*.

There are many other characters of words which it will be of use to mention. Some have both an active and passive signification; as *fearful*, that which gives or which feels terrour; a *fearful prodigy*, a *fearful hare*. Some have a personal, some a real meaning; as, in opposition to *old*, we use the adjec-

tive *young* of animated beings, and *new* of other things. Some are restrained to the sense of praise, and others to that of disapprobation; so commonly, though not always, we *exhort* to good actions, we *instigate* to ill; we *animate*, *incite* and *encourage* indifferently to good or bad. So we usually *ascribe* good, but *impute* evil; yet neither the use of these words, nor, perhaps, of any other in our licentious language, is so established as not to be often reversed by the correctest writers. I shall, therefore, since the rules of style, like those of law, arise from precedents often repeated, collect the testimonies on both sides, and endeavour to discover and promulgate the decrees of custom, who has so long possessed, whether by right or by usurpation, the sovereignty of words.

It is necessary, likewise, to explain many words by their opposition to others; for contraries are best seen when they stand together. Thus the verb *stand* has one sense, as opposed to *fall*, and another, as opposed to *fly;* for want of attending to which distinction, obvious as it is, the learned Dr. Bentley has squandered his criticism to no purpose, on these lines of Paradise Lost:

> —— In heaps
> Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,
> And fiery foaming steeds. What *stood, recoil'd*
> O'erwearied, through the faint satanic host,
> Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd,
> *Fled* ignominious.———

"Here," says the critick, "as the sentence is now read, we find that what *stood*, *fled:*" and, therefore, he proposes an alteration, which he might have

spared, if he had consulted a dictionary, and found that nothing more was affirmed than, that those *fled* who did *not fall.*

In explaining such meanings as seem accidental and adventitious, I shall endeavour to give an account of the means by which they were introduced. Thus, to *eke out* any thing, signifies to lengthen it beyond its just dimensions, by some low artifice; because the word *eke* was the usual refuge of our old writers, when they wanted a syllable. And *buxom*, which means only *obedient*, is now made, in familiar phrases, to stand for *wanton;* because in an ancient form of marriage, before the Reformation, the bride promised complaisance and obedience, in these terms: "I will be bonair and *buxom* in bed and at board."

I know well, my Lord, how trifling many of these remarks will appear, separately considered, and how easily they may give occasion to the contemptuous merriment of sportive idleness, and the gloomy censures of arrogant stupidity; but dulness it is easy to despise, and laughter it is easy to repay. I shall not be solicitous what is thought of my work, by such as know not the difficulty or importance of philological studies; nor shall think those that have done nothing, qualified to condemn me for doing little. It may not, however, be improper to remind them, that no terrestrial greatness is more than an aggregate of little things; and to inculcate, after the Arabian proverb, that drops added to drops constitute the ocean.

There remains yet to be considered the distribution of words into their proper classes, or that part of lexicography which is strictly critical.

The popular part of the language, which includes all words not appropriated to particular sciences, admits of many distinctions and subdivisions; as, into words of general use; words employed chiefly in poetry; words obsolete; words which are admitted only by particular writers, yet not in themselves improper; words used only in burlesque writing; and words impure and barbarous.

Words of general use will be known by having no sign of particularity, and their various senses will be supported by authorities of all ages.

The words appropriated to poetry will be distinguished by some mark prefixed, or will be known by having no authorities but those of poets.

Of antiquated or obsolete words, none will be inserted, but such as are to be found in authors, who wrote since the accession of Elizabeth, from which we date the golden age of our language; and of these many might be omitted, but that the reader may require, with an appearance of reason, that no difficulty should be left unresolved in books which he finds himself invited to read, as confessed and established models of style. These will be likewise pointed out by some note of exclusion, but not of disgrace.

The words which are found only in particular books, will be known by the single name of him that has used them; but such will be omitted, un-

less either their propriety, elegance or force, or the reputation of their authors, affords some extraordinary reason for their reception.

Words used in burlesque and familiar compositions, will be likewise mentioned with their proper authorities; such as *dudgeon*, from Butler, and *leasing*, from Prior; and will be diligently characterised by marks of distinction.

Barbarous, or impure, words and expressions, may be branded with some note of infamy, as they are carefully to be eradicated wherever they are found; and they occur too frequently, even in the best writers: as in Pope,

> ——*in* endless error *hurl'd*.
> '*Tis these* that early taint the female soul.

In Addison:

> Attend to what a *lesser* muse indites.

And in Dryden:

> A dreadful quiet felt, and *worser* far
> Than arms.————

If this part of the work can be well performed, it will be equivalent to the proposal made by Boileau to the academicians, that they should review all their polite writers, and correct such impurities as might be found in them, that their authority might not contribute, at any distant time, to the depravation of the language.

With regard to questions of purity or propriety, I was once in doubt whether I should not attribute too much to myself, in attempting to decide them,

and whether my province was to extend beyond the proposition of the question, and the display of the suffrages on each side; but I have been since determined, by your Lordship's opinion, to interpose my own judgment, and shall, therefore, endeavour to support what appears to me most consonant to grammar and reason. Ausonius thought that modesty forbad him to plead inability for a task to which Cæsar had judged him equal:

Cur me posse negem posse quod ille putat?

And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction, and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship.

In citing authorities, on which the credit of every part of this work must depend, it will be proper to observe some obvious rules; such as of preferring writers of the first reputation to those of an inferior rank; of noting the quotations with accuracy; and of selecting, when it can be conveniently done, such sentences, as, besides their immediate use, may give pleasure or instruction, by conveying some elegance of language, or some precept of prudence or piety.

It has been asked, on some occasions, who shall judge the judges? And since, with regard to this design, a question may arise by what authority the authorities are selected, it is necessary to obviate it,

by declaring that many of the writers whose testimonies will be alleged, were selected by Mr. Pope; of whom I may be justified in affirming, that were he still alive, solicitous as he was for the success of this work, he would not be displeased that I have undertaken it.

It will be proper that the quotations be ranged according to the ages of their authors; and it will afford an agreeable amusement, if to the words and phrases which are not of our own growth, the name of the writer who first introduced them can be affixed; and if, to words which are now antiquated, the authority be subjoined of him who last admitted them. Thus, for *scathe* and *buxom*, now obsolete, Milton may be cited:

——— The mountain oak
Stands *scath'd* to heaven. ———
——— He with broad sails
Winnow'd the *buxom* air. ———

By this method every word will have its history, and the reader will be informed of the gradual changes of the language, and have before his eyes the rise of some words, and the fall of others. But observations so minute and accurate are to be desired, rather than expected; and if use be carefully supplied, curiosity must sometimes bear its disappointments.

This, my Lord, is my idea of an English dictionary; a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our language may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened. And though,

perhaps, to correct the language of nations by books of grammar, and amend their manners by discourses of morality, may be tasks equally difficult, yet, as it is unavoidable to wish, it is natural likewise to hope, that your Lordship's patronage may not be wholly lost; that it may contribute to the preservation of ancient, and the improvement of modern writers; that it may promote the reformation of those translators, who, for want of understanding the characteristical difference of tongues, have formed a chaotick dialect of heterogeneous phrases; and awaken to the care of purer diction some men of genius, whose attention to argument makes them negligent of style, or whose rapid imagination, like the Peruvian torrents, when it brings down gold, mingles it with sand.

When I survey the Plan which I have laid before you, I cannot, my Lord, but confess, that I am frightened at its extent, and, like the soldiers of Cæsar, look on Britain as a new world, which it is almost madness to invade. But I hope, that though I should not complete the conquest, I shall, at least, discover the coast, civilize part of the inhabitants, and make it easy for some other adventurer to proceed further, to reduce them wholly to subjection, and settle them under laws.

We are taught by the great Roman orator, that every man should propose to himself the highest degree of excellence, but that he may stop with honour at the second or third: though, therefore, my performance should fall below the excellence of

other dictionaries, I may obtain, at least, the praise of having endeavoured well; nor shall I think it any reproach to my diligence, that I have retired without a triumph, from a contest with united academies, and long successions of learned compilers. I cannot hope, in the warmest moments, to preserve so much caution through so long a work, as often to sink into negligence, or to obtain so much knowledge of all its parts, as not frequently to fail by ignorance. I expect that sometimes the desire of accuracy will urge me to superfluities, and sometimes the fear of prolixity betray me to omissions; that in the extent of such variety, I shall be often bewildered, and, in the mazes of such intricacy, be frequently entangled; that in one part refinement will be subtilized beyond exactness, and evidence dilated in another beyond perspicuity. Yet I do not despair of approbation from those who, knowing the uncertainty of conjecture, the scantiness of knowledge, the fallibility of memory, and the unsteadiness of attention, can compare the causes of errour with the means of avoiding it, and the extent of art with the capacity of man: and whatever be the event of my endeavours, I shall not easily regret an attempt, which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publickly.

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,

Sam. Johnson[1].

[1] Written in the year 1747.

PREFACE TO ENGLISH DICTIONARY

IT is the fate of those, who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths, through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few.

I have, notwithstanding this discouragement, attempted a Dictionary of the English language, which, while it was employed in the cultivation of every species of literature, has itself been hitherto neglected; suffered to spread, under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance; resigned to the tyranny of time and fashion; and exposed to the corruptions of ignorance, and caprices of innovation.

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view,

Sir Joshua Reynolds. pinx.

J.K.Sherwin Sculp.

JAMES MACPHERSON, ESQ'R

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there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

Having, therefore, no assistance but from general grammar, I applied myself to the perusal of our writers; and, noting whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase, accumulated in time the materials of a dictionary, which, by degrees, I reduced to method, establishing to myself, in the progress of the work, such rules as experience and analogy suggested to me: experience, which practice and observation were continually increasing; and analogy, which, though in some words obscure, was evident in others.

In adjusting the ORTHOGRAPHY, which has been to this time unsettled and fortuitous, I found it necessary to distinguish those irregularities that are inherent in our tongue, and, perhaps, coeval with it, from others, which the ignorance or negligence of later writers has produced. Every language has its anomalies, which, though inconvenient, and in themselves once unnecessary, must be tolerated among the imperfections of human things; and which require only to be registered, that they may not be increased, and ascertained, that they may not be confounded: but every language has likewise its

improprieties and absurdities, which it is the duty of the lexicographer to correct or proscribe.

As language was at its beginning merely oral, all words of necessary or common use were spoken, before they were written; and while they were unfixed by any visible signs, must have been spoken with great diversity, as we now observe those, who cannot read, catch sounds imperfectly, and utter them negligently. When this wild and barbarous jargon was first reduced to an alphabet, every penman endeavoured to express, as he could, the sounds which he was accustomed to pronounce or to receive, and vitiated in writing such words as were already vitiated in speech. The powers of the letters, when they were applied to a new language, must have been vague and unsettled, and, therefore, different hands would exhibit the same sound by different combinations.

From this uncertain pronunciation arise, in a great part, the various dialects of the same country, which will always be observed to grow fewer and less different, as books are multiplied; and from this arbitrary representation of sounds by letters proceeds that diversity of spelling, observable in the Saxon remains, and, I suppose, in the first books of every nation, which perplexes or destroys analogy, and produces anomalous formations, that being once incorporated, can never be afterwards dismissed or reformed.

Of this kind are the derivatives *length* from *long*, *strength* from *strong*, *darling* from *dear*, *breadth* from *broad*, from *dry*, *drought*, and from *high*, *height*,

which Milton, in zeal for analogy, writes *highth*: "Quid te exempta juvat spinis de pluribus una?" to change all would be too much, and to change one is nothing.

This uncertainty is most frequent in the vowels, which are so capriciously pronounced, and so differently modified, by accident or affectation, not only in every province, but in every mouth, that to them, as is well known to etymologists, little regard is to be shown in the deduction of one language from another.

Such defects are not errours in orthography, but spots of barbarity impressed so deep in the English language, that criticism can never wash them away: these, therefore, must be permitted to remain untouched: but many words have likewise been altered by accident, or depraved by ignorance, as the pronunciation of the vulgar has been weakly followed; and some still continue to be variously written, as authors differ in their care or skill: of these it was proper to inquire the true orthography, which I have always considered as depending on their derivation, and have, therefore, referred them to their original languages: thus I write *enchant*, *enchantment*, *enchanter*, after the French, and *incantation* after the Latin; thus *entire* is chosen rather than *intire*, because it passed to us not from the Latin *integer*, but from the French *entier*.

Of many words it is difficult to say, whether they were immediately received from the Latin or the French, since at the time when we had dominions in France, we had Latin service in our churches. It

is, however, my opinion, that the French generally supplied us; for we have few Latin words, among the terms of domestick use, which are not French; but many French, which are very remote from Latin.

Even in the words of which the derivation is apparent, I have been often obliged to sacrifice uniformity to custom; thus I write, in compliance with a numberless majority, *convey* and *inveigh*, *deceit* and *receipt*, *fancy* and *phantom;* sometimes the derivative varies from the primitive, as *explain* and *explanation*, *repeat* and *repetition*.

Some combinations of letters, having the same power, are used indifferently without any discoverable reason of choice, as in *choak*, *choke ; soap*, *sope; fewel*, *fuel*, and many others; which I have sometimes inserted twice, that those, who search for them under either form, may not search in vain.

In examining the orthography of any doubtful word, the mode of spelling by which it is inserted in the series of the Dictionary, is to be considered as that to which I give, perhaps, not often rashly, the preference. I have left, in the examples, to every author his own practice unmolested, that the reader may balance suffrages, and judge between us: but this question is not always to be determined by reputed or by real learning; some men, intent upon greater things, have thought little on sounds and derivations; some, knowing in the ancient tongues, have neglected those in which our words are commonly to be sought. Thus Hammond writes *fecibleness* for *feasibleness*, because I suppose, he imagined

it derived immediately from the Latin; and some words, such as *dependant*, *dependent*, *dependance*, *dependence*, vary their final syllable, as one or another language is present to the writer.

In this part of the work, where caprice has long wantoned without control, and vanity sought praise by petty reformation, I have endeavoured to proceed with a scholar's reverence for antiquity, and a grammarian's regard to the genius of our tongue. I have attempted few alterations, and among those few, perhaps, the greater part is from the modern to the ancient practice; and, I hope, I may be allowed to recommend to those, whose thoughts have been, perhaps, employed too anxiously on verbal singularities, not to disturb, upon narrow views, or for minute propriety, the orthography of their fathers. It has been asserted, that for the law to be *known*, is of more importance than to be *right*. "Change," says Hooker, "is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better." There is in constancy and stability a general and lasting advantage, which will always overbalance the slow improvements of gradual correction. Much less ought our written language to comply with the corruptions of oral utterance, or copy that which every variation of time or place makes different from itself, and imitate those changes which will again be changed, while imitation is employed in observing them.

This recommendation of steadiness and uniformity does not proceed from an opinion, that particular com-

binations of letters have much influence on human happiness; or that truth may not be successfully taught by modes of spelling fanciful and erroneous: I am not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that *words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven.* Language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas: I wish, however, that the instrument might be less apt to decay, and that signs might be permanent, like the things which they denote.

In settling the orthography, I have not wholly neglected the pronunciation, which I have directed, by printing an accent upon the acute or elevated syllable. It will sometimes be found, that the accent is placed, by the author quoted, on a different syllable from that marked in the alphabetical series; it is then to be understood, that custom has varied, or that the author has, in my opinion, pronounced wrong. Short directions are sometimes given, where the sound of letters is irregular; and if they are sometimes omitted, defect in such minute observations will be more easily excused, than superfluity.

In the investigation both of the orthography and signification of words, their ETYMOLOGY was necessarily to be considered, and they were, therefore, to be divided into primitives and derivatives. A primitive word is that which can be traced no further to any English root; thus *circumspect*, *circumvent*, *circumstance*, *delude*, *concave*, and *complicate*, though compounds in the Latin, are to us primitives. De-

rivatives are all those that can be referred to any word in English of greater simplicity.

The derivatives I have referred to their primitives, with an accuracy sometimes needless; for who does not see that *remoteness* comes from *remote*, *lovely* from *love*, *concavity* from *concave*, and *demonstrative* from *demonstrate ?* But this grammatical exuberance the scheme of my work did not allow me to repress. It is of great importance, in examining the general fabrick of a language, to trace one word from another, by noting the usual modes of derivation and inflection; and uniformity must be preserved in systematical works, though sometimes at the expense of particular propriety.

Among other derivatives, I have been careful to insert and elucidate the anomalous plurals of nouns and preterites of verbs, which in the Teutonick dialects are very frequent, and, though familiar to those who have always used them, interrupt and embarrass the learners of our language.

The two languages from which our primitives have been derived are the Roman and Teutonick: under the Roman I comprehend the French and provincial tongues; and under the Teutonick range the Saxon, German, and all their kindred dialects. Most of our polysyllables are Roman, and our words of one syllable are very often Teutonick.

In assigning the Roman original, it has, perhaps, sometimes happened that I have mentioned only the Latin, when the word was borrowed from the French; and, considering myself as employed only in the

illustration of my own language, I have not been very careful to observe whether the Latin word be pure or barbarous, or the French elegant or obsolete.

For the Teutonick etymologies, I am commonly indebted to Junius and Skinner, the only names which I have forborne to quote when I copied their books; not that I might appropriate their labours or usurp their honours, but that I might spare a perpetual repetition by one general acknowledgment. Of these, whom I ought not to mention but with the reverence due to instructers and benefactors, Junius appears to have excelled in extent of learning, and Skinner in rectitude of understanding. Junius was accurately skilled in all the northern languages; Skinner probably examined the ancient and remoter dialects only by occasional inspection into dictionaries; but the learning of Junius is often of no other use than to show him a track, by which he may deviate from his purpose, to which Skinner always presses forward by the shortest way. Skinner is often ignorant, but never ridiculous: Junius is always full of knowledge, but his variety distracts his judgment, and his learning is very frequently disgraced by his absurdities.

The votaries of the northern muses will not, perhaps, easily restrain their indignation, when they find the name of Junius thus degraded by a disadvantageous comparison; but whatever reverence is due to his diligence, or his attainments, it can be no criminal degree of censoriousness to charge that etymologist with want of judgment, who can seri-

ously derive *dream* from *drama*, because *life is a drama, and a drama is a dream;* and who declares with a tone of defiance, that no man can fail to derive *moan* from μόνος, (*monos,*) *single* or *solitary*, who considers that grief naturally loves to be alone[m].

Our knowledge of the northern literature is so scanty, that of words undoubtedly Teutonick, the original is not always to be found in any ancient language; and I have, therefore, inserted Dutch or German substitutes, which I consider not as radical,

[m]That I may not appear to have spoken too irreverently of Junius, I have here subjoined a few specimens of his etymological extravagance.

Banish, *religare, ex banno vel territorio exigere, in exilium agere.* Gal. *bannir.* It. *bandire, bandeggiare.* H. *bandir.* B. *bannen.* Ævi medii scriptores bannire dicebant. V. Spelm. in Bannum & in Banleuga. Quoniam vero regionum urbiumq; limites arduis plerumq; montibus, altis fluminibus, longis deniq; flexuosisq; angustissimarum viarum anfractibus, includebantur, fieri potest id genus limites *ban* dici ab eo quod *Βαννάται* et *Βαννάτροι* Tarentinis olim, sicuti tradit Hesychius, vocabantur *αἱ λοξοὶ καὶ μὴ ἰθυτενεῖς ὁδοὶ*, "obliquæ ac minime in rectum tendentes viæ." Ac fortasse quoque huc facit quod *Βανοὺς*, eodem Hesychio teste, dicebant *ὄρη στραγγύλη*, montes arduos.

Empty, emtie, *vacuus, inanis.* A. S. **Æmtiȝ.** Nescio an sint ab ἐμέω vel ἐμετάω. Vomo, evomo, vomitu evacuo. Videtur interim etymologiam hanc non obscure firmare codex Rush. Mat. xii. 22. ubi antique scriptum invenimus **ȝemoeted hiᵹ emetiȝ.** "Invenit eam vacantem."

Hill, *mons, collis.* A. S. hỳll. Quod videri potest abscissum ex *κολώνη* vel *κολωνός*. Collis, tumulus, locus in plano editior. Hom. Il. B. v. 811. *ἔστι δέ τις προπάροιθε πόλεως αἰπεῖα κολώνη.* Ubi authori brevium scholiorum *κολώνη* exp. *τόπος εἰς ὕψος ἀνήκων· γεώλοφος ἐξοχή.*

Nap, *to take a nap. Dormire, condormiscere.* Cym. *heppian.* A. S. hnæppan. Quod postremum videri potest desumptum ex *κνέφας*, obscuritas, tenebræ: nihil enim æque solet consiliare somnum, quam caliginosa profundæ noctis obscuritas.

Stammerer, Balbus, blæsus. Goth. STAMMS. A. S. **ȝcamep, ȝcamuȝ.** D. *stam.* B. *stameler.* Su. *stamma.* Isl. *stamr.* Sunt a *στωμυλεῖν* vel *στωμύλλειν*, nimia loquacitate alios offendere; quod impedite loquentes libentissime garrire soleant; vel quod aliis nimii semper videantur, etiam parcissime loquentes.

but parallel, not as the parents, but sisters of the English.

The words, which are represented as thus related by descent or cognation, do not always agree in sense; for it is incident to words, as to their authors, to degenerate from their ancestors, and to change their manners when they change their country. It is sufficient, in etymological inquiries, if the senses of kindred words be found such as may easily pass into each other, or such as may both be referred to one general idea.

The etymology, so far as it is yet known, was easily found in the volumes, where it is particularly and professedly delivered; and, by proper attention to the rules of derivation, the orthography was soon adjusted. But to COLLECT the WORDS of our language was a task of greater difficulty: the deficiency of dictionaries was immediately apparent; and when they were exhausted, what was yet wanting must be sought by fortuitous and unguided excursions into books, and gleaned as industry should find, or chance should offer it, in the boundless chaos of a living speech. My search, however, has been either skilful or lucky; for I have much augmented the vocabulary.

As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have relation to proper names; such as *Arian, Socinian, Calvinist, Benedictine, Mahometan;* but have retained those of a more general nature, as *Heathen, Pagan.*

Of the terms of art I have received such as could

be found either in books of science or technical dictionaries; and have often inserted, from philosophical writers, words which are supported, perhaps, only by a single authority, and which, being not admitted into general use, stand yet as candidates or probationers, and must depend for their adoption on the suffrage of futurity.

The words which our authors have introduced by their knowledge of foreign languages, or ignorance of their own, by vanity or wantonness, by compliance with fashion or lust of innovation, I have registered as they occurred, though commonly only to censure them, and warn others against the folly of naturalizing useless foreigners to the injury of the natives.

I have not rejected any by design, merely because they were unnecessary or exuberant; but have received those which by different writers have been differently formed, as *viscid*, and *viscidity*, *viscous*, and *viscosity*.

Compounded or double words I have seldom noted, except when they obtain a signification different from that which the components have in their simple state. Thus *highwayman*, *woodman*, and *horse-courser*, require an explanation; but of *thieflike* or *coachdriver*, no notice was needed, because the primitives contain the meaning of the compounds.

Words arbitrarily formed by a constant and settled analogy, like diminutive adjectives in *ish*, as *greenish*, *bluish;* adverbs in *ly*, as *dully*, *openly;* substantives in *ness*, as *vileness*, *faultiness;* were less

diligently sought, and sometimes have been omitted, when I had no authority that invited me to insert them; not that they are not genuine and regular offsprings of English roots, but, because their relation to the primitive being always the same, their significations cannot be mistaken.

The verbal nouns in *ing*, such as the *keeping* of the *castle*, the *leading* of the *army*, are always neglected, or placed only to illustrate the sense of the verb, except when they signify things as well as actions, and have, therefore, a plural number, as *dwelling*, *living;* or have an absolute and abstract signification, as *colouring*, *painting*, *learning*.

The participles are likewise omitted, unless, by signifying rather habit or quality than action, they take the nature of adjectives; as a *thinking* man, a man of prudence; a *pacing* horse, a horse that can pace: these I have ventured to call *participial adjectives*. But neither are these always inserted, because they are commonly to be understood without any danger of mistake, by consulting the verb.

Obsolete words are admitted, when they are found in authors not obsolete, or when they have any force or beauty that may deserve revival.

As composition is one of the chief characteristicks of a language, I have endeavoured to make some reparation for the universal negligence of my predecessors, by inserting great numbers of compounded words, as may be found under *after*, *fore*, *new*, *night*, *fair*, and many more. These, numerous as they are, might be multiplied, but that use and

curiosity are here satisfied, and the frame of our language and modes of our combination amply discovered.

Of some forms of composition, such as that by which *re* is prefixed to note *repetition*, and *un* to signify *contrariety* or *privation*, all the examples cannot be accumulated, because the use of these particles, if not wholly arbitrary, is so little limited, that they are hourly affixed to new words, as occasion requires, or is imagined to require them.

There is another kind of composition more frequent in our language than, perhaps, in any other, from which arises to foreigners the greatest difficulty. We modify the signification of many verbs by a particle subjoined; as to *come off*, to escape by a fetch; to *fall on*, to attack; to *fall off*, to apostatize; to *break off*, to stop abruptly; to *bear out*, to justify; to *fall in*, to comply; to *give over*, to cease; to *set off*, to embellish; to *set in*, to begin a continual tenour; to *set out*, to begin a course or journey; to *take off*, to copy; with innumerable expressions of the same kind, of which some appear wildly irregular, being so far distant from the sense of the simple words, that no sagacity will be able to trace the steps by which they arrived at the present use. These I have noted with great care; and though I cannot flatter myself that the collection is complete, I belive I have so far assisted the students of our language, that this kind of phraseology will be no longer insuperable; and the combinations of verbs and particles, by chance omitted, will be easily

explained by comparison with those that may be found.

Many words yet stand supported only by the name of Bailey, Ainsworth, Philips, or the contracted *Dict.* for *Dictionaries* subjoined; of these I am not always certain, that they are read in any book but the works of lexicographers. Of such I have omitted many, because I had never read them; and many I have inserted, because they may, perhaps, exist, though they have escaped my notice: they are, however, to be yet considered as resting only upon the credit of former dictionaries. Others, which I considered as useful, or know to be proper, though I could not at present support them by authorities, I have suffered to stand upon my own attestation, claiming the same privilege with my predecessors, of being sometimes credited without proof.

The words, thus selected and disposed, are grammatically considered; they are referred to the different parts of speech; traced, when they are irregularly inflected, through their various termination; and illustrated by observations, not, indeed, of great or striking importance, separately considered, but necessary to the elucidation of our language, and hitherto neglected or forgotten by English grammarians.

That part of my work on which I expect malignity most frequently to fasten is, the *Explanation;* in which I cannot hope to satisfy those, who are, perhaps, not inclined to be pleased, since I have not always been able to satisfy myself. To interpret a

language by itself is very difficult; many words cannot be explained by synonymes, because the idea signified by them has not more than one appellation; not by paraphrase, because simple ideas cannot be described. When the nature of things is unknown, or the notion unsettled and indefinite, and various in various minds, the words by which such notions are conveyed, or such things denoted, will be ambiguous and perplexed. And such is the fate of hapless lexicography, that not only darkness, but light, impedes and distresses it; things may be not only too little, but too much known, to be happily illustrated. To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found; for as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit a definition.

Other words there are, of which the sense is too subtile and evanescent to be fixed in a paraphrase; such are all those which are by the grammarians termed expletives, and, in dead languages, are suffered to pass for empty sounds, of no other use than to fill a verse, or to modulate a period, but which are easily perceived in living tongues to have power and emphasis, though it be sometimes such as no other form of expression can convey.

My labour has likewise been much increased by a class of verbs too frequent in the English language, of which the signification is so loose and general, the

use so vague and indeterminate, and the senses detorted so widely from the first idea, that it is hard to trace them through the maze of variation, to catch them on the brink of utter inanity, to circumscribe them by any limitations, or interpret them by any words of distinct and settled meaning; such are *bear*, *break*, *come*, *cast*, *fall*, *get*, *give*, *do*, *put*, *set*, *go*, *run*, *make*, *take*, *turn*, *throw*. If of these the whole power is not accurately delivered, it must be remembered, that while our language is yet living, and variable by the caprice of every one that speaks it, these words are hourly shifting their relations, and can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove, in the agitation of a storm, can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water.

The particles are among all nations applied with so great latitude, that they are not easily reducible under any regular scheme of explication: this difficulty is not less, nor, perhaps, greater, in English, than in other languages. I have laboured them with diligence, I hope with success; such at least as can be expected in a task, which no man, however learned or sagacious, has yet been able to perform.

Some words there are which I cannot explain, because I do not understand them; these might have been omitted very often with little inconvenience, but I would not so far indulge my vanity, as to decline this confession; for when Tully owns himself ignorant whether *lessus*, in the twelve tables, means a *funeral song*, or *mourning garment*; and Aristotle doubts whether οὐρεὺς in the Iliad, signifies a *mule*,

or *muleteer*, I may surely, without shame, leave some obscurities to happier industry, or future information.

The rigour of interpretative lexicography requires that *the explanation*, and *the word explained, should be always reciprocal;* this I have always endeavoured, but could not always attain. Words are seldom exactly synonymous; a new term was not introduced, but because the former was thought inadequate: names, therefore, have often many ideas, but few ideas have many names. It was then necessary to use the proximate word, for the deficiency of single terms can very seldom be supplied by circumlocution; nor is the inconvenience great of such mutilated interpretations, because the sense may easily be collected entire from the examples.

In every word of extensive use, it was requisite to mark the progress of its meaning, and show by what gradations of intermediate sense it has passed from its primitive to its remote and accidental signification; so that every foregoing explanation should tend to that which follows, and the series be regularly concatenated from the first notion to the last.

This is specious, but not always practicable; kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other. When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their nature collateral? The shades of

meaning sometimes pass imperceptibly into each other, so that though on one side they apparently differ, yet it is impossible to mark the point of contact. Ideas of the same race, though not exactly alike, are sometimes so little different, that no words can express the dissimilitude, though the mind easily perceives it, when they are exhibited together; and sometimes there is such a confusion of acceptations, that discernment is wearied and distinction puzzled, and perseverance herself hurries to an end, by crowding together what she cannot separate.

These complaints of difficulty will, by those that have never considered words beyond their popular use, be thought only the jargon of a man willing to magnify his labours, and procure veneration to his studies by involution and obscurity. But every art is obscure to those that have not learned it: this uncertainty of terms, and commixture of ideas, is well known to those who have joined philosophy with grammar; and, if I have not expressed them very clearly, it must be remembered that I am speaking of that which words are insufficient to explain.

The original sense of words is often driven out of use by their metaphorical acceptations, yet must be inserted for the sake of a regular origination. Thus I know not whether *ardour* is used for *material heat*, or whether *flagrant*, in English, ever signifies the same with *burning;* yet such are the primitive ideas of these words, which are, therefore, set first, though without examples, that the figurative senses may be commodiously deduced.

Such is the exuberance of signification which many words have obtained, that it was scarcely possible to collect all their senses; sometimes the meaning of derivatives must be sought in the mother term, and sometimes deficient explanations of the primitive may be supplied in the train of derivation. In any case of doubt or difficulty, it will be always proper to examine all the words of the same race; for some words are slightly passed over to avoid repetition; some admitted easier and clearer explanation than others; and all will be better understood, as they are considered in greater variety of structures and relations.

All the interpretations of words are not written with the same skill, or the same happiness: things, equally easy in themselves, are not all equally easy to any single mind. Every writer of a long work commits errours, where there appears neither ambiguity to mislead, nor obscurity to confound him: and, in a search like this, many felicities of expression will be casually overlooked, many convenient parallels will be forgotten, and many particulars will admit improvement from a mind utterly unequal to the whole performance.

But many seeming faults are to be imputed rather to the nature of the undertaking, than the negligence of the performer. Thus some explanations are unavoidably reciprocal or circular, as *hind, the female of the stag; stag, the male of the hind:* sometimes easier words are changed into harder, as *burial* into *sepulture,* or *interment, drier* into *desiccative, dryness* into

siccity or *aridity*, *fit* into *paroxysm;* for the easiest word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy. But easiness and difficulty are merely relative; and, if the present prevalence of our language should invite foreigners to this Dictionary, many will be assisted by those words, which now seem only to increase or produce obscurity. For this reason I have endeavoured frequently to join a Teutonick and Roman interpretation, as to *cheer*, to *gladden* or *exhilarate*, that every learner of English may be assisted by his own tongue.

The solution of all difficulties, and the supply of all defects, must be sought in the examples, subjoined to the various senses of each word, and ranged according to the time of their authors.

When I first collected these authorities, I was desirous that every quotation should be useful to some other end than the illustration of a word; I, therefore, extracted from philosophers principles of science; from historians remarkable facts; from chymists complete processes; from divines striking exhortations; and from poets beautiful descriptions. Such is design, while it is yet at a distance from execution. When the time called upon me to range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alphabetical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volumes would fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in English literature, and reduce my transcripts very often to clusters of words, in which scarcely any meaning is retained:

thus to the weariness of copying, I was condemned to add the vexation of expunging. Some passages I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches, and intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty deserts of barren philology.

The examples, thus mutilated, are no longer to be considered as conveying the sentiments or doctrine of their authors; the word, for the sake of which they are inserted, with all its appendant clauses, has been carefully preserved; but it may sometimes happen, by hasty detruncation, that the general tendency of the sentence may be changed: the divine may desert his tenets, or the philosopher his system.

Some of the examples have been taken from writers who were never mentioned as masters of elegance, or models of style; but words must be sought where they are used; and in what pages, eminent for purity, can terms of manufacture or agriculture be found? Many quotations serve no other purpose, than that of proving the bare existence of words, and are, therefore, selected with less scrupulousness than those which are to teach their structures and relations.

My purpose was to admit no testimony of living authors, that I might not be misled by partiality, and that none of my contemporaries might have reason to complain; nor have I departed from this resolution, but when some performance of uncommon excellence excited my veneration, when my memory supplied me from late books with an example that was wanting, or when my heart, in the

tenderness of friendship, solicited admission for a favourite name.

So far have I been from any care to grace my pages with modern decorations, that I have studiously endeavoured to collect examples and authorities from the writers before the Restoration, whose works I regard as *the wells of English undefiled*, as the pure sources of genuine diction. Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its original Teutonick character, and deviating towards a Gallick structure and phraseology[n], from which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it, by making our ancient volumes the ground-work of style, admitting among the additions of later times only such as may supply real deficiencies, such as are readily adopted by the genius of our tongue, and incorporate easily with our native idioms.

But as every language has a time of rudeness antecedent to perfection, as well as of false refinement and declension, I have been cautious lest my zeal for antiquity might drive me into times too remote, and crowd my book with words now no longer understood. I have fixed Sidney's work for the boundary, beyond which I make few excursions. From the authors which rose in the time of Elizabeth, a speech might be formed adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance. If the language of theology were extracted from Hooker and the trans-

[n] The structure of Hume's sentences is French. For Johnson's opinion of it see Boswell, i. 420, Edit. 1816.

lation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from Bacon; the phrases of policy, war, and navigation from Raleigh; the dialect of poetry and fiction from Spenser and Sidney; and the diction of common life from Shakespeare, few ideas would be lost to mankind, for want of English words, in which they might be expressed.

It is not sufficient that a word is found, unless it be so combined as that its meaning is apparently determined by the tract and tenour of the sentence; such passages I have, therefore, chosen, and when it happened that any author gave a definition of a term, or such an explanation as is equivalent to a definition, I have placed his authority as a supplement to my own, without regard to the chronological order, that is otherwise observed.

Some words, indeed, stand unsupported by any authority, but they are commonly derivative nouns or adverbs, formed from their primitives by regular and constant analogy, or names of things seldom occurring in books, or words of which I have reason to doubt the existence.

There is more danger of censure from the multiplicity than paucity of examples; authorities will sometimes seem to have been accumulated without necessity or use, and, perhaps, some will be found, which might, without loss, have been omitted. But a work of this kind is not hastily to be charged with superfluities: those quotations, which to careless or unskilful perusers appear only to repeat the same sense, will often exhibit, to a more accurate exam-

iner, diversities of significations, or, at least, afford different shades of the same meaning: one will show the word applied to persons, another to things; one will express an ill, another a good, and a third a neutral sense; one will prove the expression genuine from an ancient author; another will show it elegant from a modern: a doubtful authority is corroborated by another of more credit; an ambiguous sentence is ascertained by a passage clear and determinate: the word, how often soever repeated, appears with new associates, and in different combinations, and every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language.

When words are used equivocally, I receive them in either sense; when they are metaphorical, I adopt them in their primitive acceptation.

I have sometimes, though rarely, yielded to the temptation of exhibiting a genealogy of sentiments, by showing how one author copied the thoughts and diction of another: such quotations are, indeed, little more than repetitions, which might justly be censured, did they not gratify the mind, by affording a kind of intellectual history.

The various syntactical structures occurring in the examples have been carefully noted; the license or negligence, with which many words have been hitherto used, has made our style capricious and indeterminate; when the different combinations of the same word are exhibited together, the preference is readily given to propriety, and I have often endeavoured to direct the choice.

Thus I have laboured, by settling the orthography, displaying the analogy, regulating the structures, and ascertaining the signification of English words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer: but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations. The work, whatever proofs of diligence and attention it may exhibit, is yet capable of many improvements: the orthography which I recommend is still controvertible; the etymology which I adopt is uncertain, and, perhaps, frequently erroneous; the explanations are sometimes too much contracted, and sometimes too much diffused; the significations are distinguished rather with subtilty than skill, and the attention is harassed with unnecessary minuteness.

The examples are too often injudiciously truncated, and perhaps sometimes, I hope very rarely, alleged in a mistaken sense; for in making this collection I trusted more to memory, than, in a state of disquiet and embarrassment, memory can contain, and purposed to supply, at the review, what was left incomplete in the first transcription.

Many terms, appropriated to particular occupations, though necessary and significant, are undoubtedly omitted; and, of the words most studiously considered and exemplified, many senses have escaped observation.

Yet these failures, however frequent, may admit extenuation and apology. To have attempted much is always laudable, even when the enterprise is above the strength that undertakes it: To rest below his

own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself, because he has done much, but because he can conceive little. When first I engaged in this work, I resolved to leave neither words nor things unexamined, and pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, with the obscure recesses of northern learning which I should enter and ransack, the treasures with which I expected every search into those neglected mines to reward my labour, and the triumph with which I should display my acquisitions to mankind. When I had thus inquired into the original of words, I resolved to show likewise my attention to things; to pierce deep into every science, to inquire the nature of every substance of which I inserted the name, to limit every idea by a definition strictly logical, and exhibit every production of art or nature in an accurate description, that my book might be in place of all other dictionaries, whether appellative or technical. But these were the dreams of a poet, doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to inquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments, that what I had not of my own was easily

to be obtained: I saw that one inquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed; and that thus to pursue perfection, was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more incumbrance than assistance; by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended, though not completed.

Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligence; some faults will at last appear to be the effects of anxious diligence and persevering activity. The nice and subtile ramifications of meaning were not easily avoided by a mind intent upon accuracy, and convinced of the necessity of disentangling combinations, and separating similitudes. Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle, will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary can ever be accurately compiled, or skilfully examined.

Some senses however there are, which, though not the same. are yet so nearly allied, that they are often confounded. Most men think indistinctly, and, therefore, cannot speak with exactness; and, consequently, some examples might be indifferently put to either

signification: this uncertainty is not to be imputed to me, who do not form, but register the language; who do not teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts.

The imperfect sense of some examples I lamented, but could not remedy, and hope they will be compensated by innumerable passages selected with propriety, and preserved with exactness; some shining with sparks of imagination, and some replete with treasures of wisdom.

The orthography and etymology, though imperfect, are not imperfect for want of care, but because care will not always be successful, and recollection or information come too late for use.

That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged; but for this defect I may boldly allege that it was unavoidable: I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation, nor visit the warehouses of merchants, and shops of artificers, to gain the names of wares, tools, and operations, of which no mention is found in books; what favourable accident or easy inquiry brought within my reach, has not been neglected; but it had been a hopeless labour to glean up words, by courting living information, and contesting with the sullenness of one, and the roughness of another.

To furnish the academicians *della Crusca* with words of this kind, a series of comedies called *la Fiera*, or the Fair, was professedly written by Buon-

arotti; but I had no such assistant, and, therefore, was content to want what they must have wanted likewise, had they not luckily been so supplied.

Nor are all words, which are not found in the vocabulary, to be lamented as omissions. Of the laborious and mercantile part of the people, the diction is in a great measure casual and mutable; many of their terms are formed for some temporary or local convenience, and though current at certain times and places, are in others utterly unknown. This fugitive cant, which is always in a state of increase or decay, cannot be regarded as any part of the durable materials of a language, and, therefore, must be suffered to perish with other things unworthy of preservation.

Care will sometimes betray to the appearance of negligence. He that is catching opportunities which seldom occur, will suffer those to pass by unregarded, which he expects hourly to return; he that is searching for rare and remote things, will neglect those that are obvious and familiar: thus many of the most common and cursory words have been inserted with little illustration, because in gathering the authorities, I forbore to copy those which I thought likely to occur, whenever they were wanted. It is remarkable that, in reviewing my collection, I found the word SEA unexemplified.

Thus it happens, that in things difficult there is danger from ignorance, and in things easy from confidence; the mind, afraid of greatness, and disdainful of littleness, hastily withdraws herself from painful searches, and passes with scornful rapidity

over tasks not adequate to her powers; sometimes too secure for caution, and again too anxious for vigorous effort; sometimes idle in a plain path, and sometimes distracted in labyrinths, and dissipated by different intentions.

A large work is difficult, because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility; where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected, that the stones which form the dome of a temple, should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

Of the event of this work, for which, having laboured it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, will require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear, that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify. When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall

imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity and affectation.

With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain; sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. The French language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy; the style of Amelot's translation of father Paul is observed by Le Courayer to be *un peu passé;* and no Italian will maintain, that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of Boccace, Machiavel, or Caro.

Total and sudden transformations of a language seldom happen; conquests and migrations are now very rare; but there are other causes of change, which, though slow in their operation, and invisible in their progress, are, perhaps, as much superiour to human resistance, as the revolutions of the sky, or intumescence of the tide. Commerce, however necessary, however lucrative, as it depraves the manners, corrupts the language; that they have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavour to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traffickers on the Mediterranean and Indian coasts.

This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

There are likewise internal causes equally forcible. The language most likely to continue long without alteration, would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniencies of life; either without books, or, like some of the Mahometan countries, with very few: men thus busied and unlearned, having only such words as common use requires, would, perhaps, long continue to express the same notions by the same signs. But no such constancy can be expected in a people polished by arts, and classed by subordination, where one part of the community is sustained and accommodated by the labour of the other. Those who have much leisure to think, will always be enlarging the stock of ideas; and every increase of knowledge, whether real or fancied, will produce new words, or combinations of words. When the mind is unchained from necessity, it will range after convenience; when it is left at large in the fields of speculation, it will shift opinions; as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular, it will innovate speech in the same proportion as it alters practice.

As by the cultivation of various sciences, a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with

words deflected from their original sense; the geometrician will talk of a "courtier's zenith, or the eccentrick virtue of a wild hero;" and the physician of "sanguine expectations and phlegmatick delays." Copiousness of speech will give opportunities to capricious choice, by which some words will be preferred, and others degraded; vicissitudes of fashion will enforce the use of new, or extend the signification of known terms. The tropes of poetry will make hourly encroachments, and the metaphorical will become the current sense: pronunciation will be varied by levity or ignorance, and the pen must at length comply with the tongue; illiterate writers will, at one time or other, by publick infatuation, rise into renown, who, not knowing the original import of words, will use them with colloquial licentiousness, confound distinction, and forget propriety. As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered as too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others as too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy; new phases are, therefore, adopted, which must, for the same reasons, be in time dismissed. Swift, in his petty treatise on the English language, allows that new words must sometimes be introduced, but proposes that none should be suffered to become obsolete. But what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it? and how shall it be continued, when it conveys an offensive idea, or recalled again into the mouths of mankind, when it has once become unfamiliar by disuse, and unpleasing by unfamiliarity?

There is another cause of alteration more prevalent than any other, which yet in the present state of the world cannot be obviated. A mixture of two languages will produce a third distinct from both; and they will always be mixed, where the chief part of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste and negligence, refinement and affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotick expressions.

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same; but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our style; which I, who can never wish to see dependance multiplied, hope the spirit of English liberty will hinder or destroy, let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the license of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of France.

If the changes, that we fear, be thus irresistible, what remains but to acquiesce with silence, as in the

other insurmountable distresses of humanity? It remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language[o].

In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors: whether I shall add any thing by my own writings to the reputation of English literature, must be left to time: much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if, by my assistance, foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and under-

[o] Blackstone very frequently denounces the use of Norman French in our law proceedings, and in Parliament as a badge of slavery, which he could have wished to see "fall into total oblivion, unless it be reserved as a solemn memento to remind us that our liberties are mortal, having once been destroyed by a foreign force." Much amusing and interesting research on the once preavlent use of French in England, is exhibited in Barrington's Observations on the more Antient Statutes.

> And Frenche she spake full fetously;
> After the schole of *Stratforde at Bowe*,
> For Frenche of Paris was to her unknowne.
>
> Chaucer's Prologue to the Prioress' Tale.

stand the teachers of truth; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to Bacon, to Hooker, to Milton, and to Boyle.

When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself: a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may, for a time, furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since, while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he, whose design includes whatever language can express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end, and sometimes faint with weariness under a task, which Scaliger compares to the labours of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprise vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory, at the moment of

need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts to-morrow.

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt, which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied criticks of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those, whom

I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I, therefore, dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise[p].

[p]Dr. Johnson's Dictionary was published on the fifteenth day of April 1755, in two vols. folio, price 4*l.* 10*s.* bound. The booksellers who engaged in this national work were the Knaptons, Longman, Hitch and Co. Millar, and Dodsley.

ADVERTISEMENT TO FOURTH EDITION OF ENGLISH DICTIONARY[q]

MANY are the works of human industry, which to begin and finish are hardly granted to the same man. He that undertakes to compile a dictionary, undertakes that, which, if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform. Yet his labours, though deficient, may be useful, and with the hope of this inferiour praise, he must incite his activity, and solace his weariness.

Perfection is unattainable, but nearer and nearer approaches may be made; and, finding my Dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured, by a revisal, to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiencies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts that were disordered, and illuminated some that were obscure. Yet the changes or additions bear a very small proportion to the whole. The critick will now have less to object, but the student who has bought any of the former copies needs not repent; he will not, without nice collation, perceive how they differ; and usefulness seldom depends upon little things.

For negligence or deficience, I have, perhaps, not need of more apology than the nature of the work will furnish: I have left that inaccurate which never was made exact, and that imperfect which never was completed.

[q]Published in folio, 1773.

PREFACE TO THE OCTAVO EDITION OF THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY[r]

HAVING been long employed in the study and cultivation of the English language, I lately published a dictionary, like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism or elegance of style.

But it has been since considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary to the greater number of readers, who, seldom intending to write or presuming to judge, turn over books only to amuse their leisure, and to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life: these know not any other use of a dictionary than that of adjusting orthography, or explaining terms of science, or words of infrequent occurence or remote derivation.

For these purposes many dictionaries have been written by different authors, and with different degrees of skill; but none of them have yet fallen into my hands by which even the lowest expectations could be satisfied. Some of their authors wanted industry, and others literature: some knew not their own defects, and others were too idle to supply them.

For this reason a small dictionary appeared yet to be wanting to common readers; and, as I may without arrogance claim to myself a longer acquaintance with the lexicography of our language than any other writer has had, I shall hope to be considered

[r] Published in 2 vols. 1756.

as having more experience at least than most of my predecessors, and as more likely to accommodate the nation with a vocabulary of daily use. I, therefore, offer to the publick an abstract or epitome of my former work.

In comparing this with other dictionaries of the same kind, it will be found to have several advantages.

1. It contains many words not to be found in any other.

2. Many barbarous terms and phrases, by which other dictionaries may vitiate the style, are rejected from this.

3. The words are more correctly spelled, partly by attention to their etymology, and partly by observation of the practice of the best authors.

4. The etymologies and derivations, whether from foreign languages or from native roots, are more diligently traced, and more distinctly noted.

5. The senses of each word are more copiously enumerated, and more clearly explained.

6. Many words occurring in the elder authors, such as Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, which had been hitherto omitted, are here carefully inserted; so that this book may serve as a glossary or expository index to the poetical writers.

7. To the words, and to the different senses of each word, are subjoined from the large dictionary the names of those writers by whom they have been used; so that the reader who knows the different periods of the language, and the time of its authors, may judge of the elegance or prevalence of any

word, or meaning of a word; and without recurring to other books, may know what are antiquated, what are unusual, and what are recommended by the best authority.

The words of this Dictionary, as opposed to others, are more diligently collected, more accurately spelled, more faithfully explained, and more authentically ascertained. Of an abstract it is not necessary to say more; and I hope, it will not be found that truth requires me to say less.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH:

WITH REMARKS ON SIR T. HANMER'S EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE

First Printed in the Year 1745

NOTE I

ACT I. SCENE I

Enter three Witches

IN order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet, who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability; he would be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies; but a survey of the notions, that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove, that Shakespeare was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted to his advantage, and was far from overburdening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most by the learned

themselves[s]. These phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. The time, in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantment or diabolical opposition, as they ascribe their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Dr. Warburton appears to believe (Supplement to the Introduction to Don Quixote) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those who returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly, as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though, perhaps, the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. Olympiodorus, in Photius's Extracts, tells us of one Libanius, who practised this kind of military magick, and having promised

χώρις ὁπλιτῶν κατὰ βαρβάρων ἐνεργεῖν, *to perform great things*

[s] "To deny the possibility, nay, the actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is, at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God, in various passages both of the Old and New Testament: and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath, in its turn, borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well-attested, or by prohibitory laws, which, at least, suppose the possibility of commerce with evil spirits." Blackstone, Commentaries iv. 60. The learned judge, however, concludes with calling it a "dubious crime," and approves the maxim of the philosophic Montesquieu, whom no one would lightly accuse of superstition, that "il faut être très-circonspect dans la *poursuite* de la magie et de l'hérésie." Esprit des Lois, xii. 5. Selden attempted to justify the punishing witchcraft capitally. Works, iii. 2077. See Spectator, 117. Barrington's Antient Statutes, 407.

against the barbarians without soldiers, was, at the instances of the emperess Placidia, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The emperess showed some kindness in her anger by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. Chrysostom's book de Sacerdotio, which exhibits a scene of enchantments, not exceeded by any romance of the middle age; he supposes a spectator, overlooking a field of battle, attended by one that points out all the various objects of horrour, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. Δεικνύτο δὲ ἔτι παρὰ τοῖς ἐναντίοις καὶ πετομένους ἵππους διά τινος μαγγανείας, καὶ ὁπλίτας δι' ἀέρος φερομένους, καὶ τάσην γοητείας δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν. *Let him then proceed to show him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magick.* Whether St. Chrysostom believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such notions were in his time received, and that, therefore, they were not imported from the Saracens in a later age; the wars with the Saracens, however, gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a greater distance, and distance, either of time or place, is sufficient to reconcile weak minds to wonderful relations.

The reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually increasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to hover in the twilight. In the time of queen Elizabeth was the remarkable trial of the witches of Warbois, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at Huntingdon. But in the reign of king James, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in England, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the Scottish dialect, and published at Edinburgh. This book was, soon after his accession, reprinted at London; and, as the ready way to gain king James's favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour, and it had a tendency to free cowardice from reproach. The infection soon reached the parliament,

who, in the first year of king James, made a law, by which it was enacted, chap. xii. That, "if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman or child out of the grave,—or the skin, bone or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person, being convicted, shall suffer death." This law was repealed in our time.

Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal, to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some places, that bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire, where their number was greater than that of the houses[t]. The Jesuits and Sectaries took

[t] In Nashe's Lenten Stuff, 1599, it is said, that no less than six hundred witches were executed at one time. Reed.——Boswell's Shakespeare, xi. 5. Dr. Grey, in his notes on Hudibras, mentions, that Hopkins the noted witchfinder hanged sixty suspected witches in one year. He also cites Hutchinson on Witchcraft for thirty thousand having been burnt in 150 years.

See Barrington on Antient Statutes

advantage of this universal errour, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of persons afflicted by evil spirits; but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation Shakespeare might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting[u].

NOTE II

ACT I. SCENE II

——The merciless Macdonal,—from the western isles
Of *Kernes* and *Gallowglasses* was supply'd;
And fortune on his damned *quarry* smiling,
Shew'd like a rebel's whore.——

Kernes are light-armed, and *Gallowglasses* heavy-armed soldiers. The word *quarry* has no sense that is properly applicable in this place, and, therefore, it is necessary to read,

And fortune on his damned *quarrel* smiling.

Quarrel was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*, and is to be found in that sense in Hollingshed's account of the story of

[u] Johnson's apprehensions here are surely unfounded. The region of Fancy, however, in his mind, was very circumscribed. Mrs. Montague's chapter on Shakespeare's Preternatural Beings, in her excellent Essay, will repay perusal. See too Schlegel on Dramatic Literature.

Macbeth, who, upon the creation of the prince of Cumberland, thought, says the historian, that he had *a just quarrel* to endeavour after the crown. The sense, therefore, is, *fortune smiling on his execrable cause, &c.*

NOTE III

> If I say sooth, I must report, they were
> As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks,
> So they redoubled strokes upon the foe.

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured to improve the sense of this passage by altering the punctuation thus:

> ——They were
> As cannons overcharg'd; with double cracks
> So they redoubled strokes.——

He declares, with some degree of exultation, that he has no idea of *a cannon charged with double cracks;* but, surely, the great author will not gain much by an alteration which makes him say of a hero, that he *redoubles strokes with double cracks*, an expression not more loudly to be applauded, or more easily pardoned, than that which is rejected in its favour. That a *cannon is charged with thunder* or *with double thunders* may be written, not only without nonsense, but with elegance: and nothing else is here meant by *cracks*, which in the time of this writer was a word of such emphasis and dignity, that in this play he terms the general dissolution of nature the *crack of doom.*

There are among Mr. Theobald's alterations others which I do not approve, though I do not

always censure them; for some of his amendments are so excellent, that, even when he has failed, he ought to be treated with indulgence and respect.

NOTE IV

King. But who comes here?
Mal. The worthy Thane of Rosse.
Len. What haste looks through his eyes?
So should he look, that *seems* to speak things strange.

The meaning of this passage, as it now stands, is, *so should he look, that looks as if he told things strange*. But Rosse neither yet told strange things, nor could look as if he told them; Lenox only conjectured from his air that he had strange things to tell, and, therefore, undoubtedly said,

——What haste looks through his eyes?
So should he look, that *teems* to speak things strange.

He looks like one that *is big* with something of importance; a metaphor so natural, that it is every day used in common discourse.

NOTE V

SCENE III

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

1 *Witch*. Where hast thou been, sister?
2 *Witch*. Killing swine.
3 *Witch*. Sister, where thou?
1 *Witch*. A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht. Give me, quoth I.
(1) Aroint thee, witch!—the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' Tyger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—and I'll do.

2 *Witch.* I'll give thee a wind
1 *Witch.* Thou art kind.
3 *Witch.* And I another.
1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other.
And the (2) very points they blow;
All the quarters that they know,
I' th' ship-man's card.———
I will drain him dry as hay,
Sleep shall neither night nor day,
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man (3) forbid;
Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine;
Tho' his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look, what I have.
2 *Witch.* Shew me, Shew me.

(1) Aroint thee, witch!

In one of the folio editions the reading is *anoint thee*, in a sense very consistent with the common accounts of witches, who are related to perform many supernatural acts by the means of unguents, and particularly to fly through the air to the place where they meet at their hellish festivals. In this sense *anoint thee, witch*, will mean, *away, witch, to your infernal assembly.* This reading I was inclined to favour, because I had met with the word *aroint* in no other author; till looking into Hearne's Collections, I found it in a very old drawing, that he has published, in which St. Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label issuing out from his mouth with these words, "OUT OUT ARONGT," of which the last is evidently the

same with *aroint*, and used in the same sense as in this passage.

(2) And the *very* points they blow.

As the word *very* is here of no other use than to fill up the verse, it is likely that Shakespeare wrote *various*, which might be easily mistaken for *very*, being either negligently read, hastily pronounced, or imperfectly heard.

(3) He shall live a man *forbid*.

Mr. Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed*, but without giving any reason of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray*, as in this Saxon fragment:

He ꝛ ꝑꝛ ꝑ bꝛ ꝫ bove, &c.

He is wise that *prays* and makes amends.

As to *forbid*, therefore, implies to *prohibit*, in opposition to the word *bid*, in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse*, when it is derived from the same word in its primitive meaning.

NOTE VI

SCENE V

The incongruity of all the passages, in which the *Thane of Cawdor* is mentioned, is very remarkable; in the second scene the Thanes of Rosse and Angus bring the king an account of the battle, and inform him that Norway,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict.

It appears that Cawdor was taken prisoner, for the king says, in the same scene,

> —— Go, pronounce his death;
> And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Yet though Cawdor was thus taken by Macbeth, in arms against his king, when Macbeth is saluted, in the fourth scene, *Thane of Cawdor*, by the Weird Sisters, he asks,

> But how, of *Cawdor?* the Thane of Cawdor lives.
> A prosp'rous gentleman;——

And in the next line considers the promises, that he should be Cawdor and King, as equally unlikely to be accomplished. How can Macbeth be ignorant of the state of the Thane of Cawdor, whom he has just defeated and taken prisoner, or call him a *prosperous gentleman* who has forfeited his title and life by open rebellion? Or why should he wonder that the title of the rebel whom he has overthrown should be conferred upon him? He cannot be supposed to dissemble his knowledge of the condition of Cawdor, because he inquires with all the ardour of curiosity, and the vehemence of sudden astonishment; and because nobody is present but Banquo, who had an equal part in the battle, and was equally acquainted with Cawdor's treason. However, in the next scene, his ignorance still continues; and when Rosse and Angus present him from the king with his new title, he cries out,

> ——The Thane of Cawdor lives;
> Why do you dress me in his borrow'd robes?

Rosse and Angus, who were the messengers that, in

the second scene, informed the king of the assistance given by Cawdor to the invader, having lost, as well as Macbeth, all memory of what they had so lately seen and related, make this answer,

> ——Whether he was
> Combin'd with Norway, or did line the rebel
> With hidden help and 'vantage, or with both
> He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not.

Neither Rosse knew what he had just reported, nor Macbeth what he had just done. This seems not to be one of the faults that are to be imputed to the transcribers, since, though the inconsistency of Rosse and Angus might be removed, by supposing that their names are erroneously inserted, and that only Rosse brought the account of the battle, and only Angus was sent to compliment Macbeth, yet the forgetfulness of Macbeth cannot be palliated, since what he says could not have been spoken by any other.

NOTE VII

> My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man,——

The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakespeare for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body* of men.

NOTE VIII

> *Macbeth.*——Come what come may,
> *Time and the hour* runs through the roughest day.

I suppose every reader is disgusted at the tautology in this passage, *time and the hour*, and will,

therefore, willingly believe that Shakespeare wrote it thus,

——Come what come may,
Time! on!—the hour runs thro' the roughest day.

Macbeth is deliberating upon the events which are to befall him; but finding no satisfaction from his own thoughts, he grows impatient of reflection, and resolves to wait the close without harassing himself with conjectures:

——Come what come may.

But, to shorten the pain of suspense, he calls upon time, in the usual style of ardent desire, to quicken his motion,

Time! on! ——

He then comforts himself with the reflection that all his perplexity must have an end,

——The hour runs thro' the roughest day.

This conjecture is supported by the passage in the letter to his lady, in which he says, *They referr'd me to the* coming on of time *with, Hail, King that shall be.*

NOTE IX

SCENE VI

Malcolm. —— Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He dy'd,
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he *ow'd*,
As 'twere a careless trifle.

As the word *ow'd* affords here no sense, but such as is forced and unnatural, it cannot be doubted that it was originally written, The dearest thing he

own'd; a reading which needs neither defence nor explication.

NOTE X

King.——There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face:

The *construction of the mind* is, I believe, a phrase peculiar to Shakespeare; it implies the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill.

NOTE XI

Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties; and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing *every thing*
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Of the last line of this speech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Dr. Warburton and Mr. Theobald have admitted as the true reading:

—— our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing every thing
Fiefs to your love and honour.

My esteem for these criticks, inclines me to believe, that they cannot be much pleased with the expressions, *Fiefs to love*, or *Fiefs to honour;* and that they have proposed this alteration, rather because no other occurred to them, than because they approved it. I shall, therefore, propose a bolder change, perhaps, with no better success, but "sua cuique placent." I read thus,

——— our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing *nothing*,
Save tow'rd *your love and honour.*

We do but perform our duty, when we contract all our views to your service, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour.*

It is probable that this passage was first corrupted by writing *safe* for *save*, and the lines then stood thus:

—— doing nothing
Safe tow'rd your love and honour.

Which the next transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real fault, altered to the present reading.

NOTE XII

SCENE VII

——Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do, if thou have *it;*
"And that," &c.

As the object of Macbeth's desire is here introduced speaking of itself, it is necessary to read,

——thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, "thus thou must do, if thou have *me.*"

NOTE XIII

——— Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth *seem*
To have thee crown'd withal.

For *seem*, the sense evidently directs us to read *seek*. The crown to which fate destines thee, and

which preternatural agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. The *golden round* is the *diadem.*

NOTE XIV

Lady Macbeth.————Come, all you spirits
That tend on *mortal thoughts*, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep peace* between
Th' effect and it!

————Mortal thoughts,————

This expression signifies not *the thoughts of mortals*, but *murderous, deadly*, or *destructive designs.* So in Act v.

Hold fast the *mortal* sword.

And in another place,

With twenty *mortal* murthers.

———Nor keep *peace* between
Th' effect and it ! ———

The intent of Lady Macbeth evidently is to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse, may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect; but neither this, nor indeed any other sense, is expressed by the present reading, and, therefore, it cannot be doubted that Shakespeare wrote differently, perhaps, thus:

That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor *keep pace* between
Th' effect and it.

To *keep pace between*, may signify to *pass between*, to *intervene. Pace* is, on many occasions, a favourite

of Shakespeare. This phrase, is indeed, not usual in this sense; but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption?

NOTE XV

SCENE VIII

King. This castle hath a pleasant *seat;* the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty frieze,
Buttrice, nor coigne of 'vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is delicate.

In this short scene, I propose a slight alteration to be made, by substituting *site* for *seat*, as the ancient word for *situation;* and *sense* for *senses*, as more agreeable to the measure; for which reason likewise I have endeavoured to adjust this passage,

———heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty frieze,

by changing the punctuation and adding the syllable thus,

———heaven's breath
Smells wooingly. Here is no jutty frieze,

Those who have perused books, printed at the time of the first editions of Shakespeare, know that greater alterations than these are necessary almost in every page, even where it is not to be doubted, that the copy was correct.

NOTE XVI

SCENE X

The arguments by which Lady Macbeth persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature. She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the housebreaker, and sometimes the conqueror; but this sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed, by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost:

> I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none.

This topick, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene, with peculiar propriety, to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier, and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan, another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others is virtuous in them: this argument Shakespeare, whose plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shown that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter.

NOTE XVII

Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat i' th' adage.

The adage alluded to is, The cat loves fish but dares not wet her foot.

Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.

NOTE XVIII

Will I with wine and wassel so convince.

To convince is, in Shakespeare, to *overpower* or *subdue*, as in this play:

——Their malady *convinces*
The great assay of art.

NOTE XIX

——Who shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell ?*

Quell is *murder*, *manquellers* being, in the old language, the term for which *murderers* is now used.

NOTE XX

ACT II. SCENE II

——— Now o'er one half the world
(1) *Nature seems dead*, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecat's offerings: and wither'd murther,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With (2) *Tarquin's ravishing sides* tow'rds his design
Moves like a ghost.— Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about;
And (3) *take the present horror from the time,*
Which now suits with it.———

(1)———Now o'er one half the world
Nature seems dead.

That is, *over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased.* This image, which is, perhaps, the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden, in his Conquest of Mexico.

> All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead,
> The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head:
> The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
> And sleeping flowers beneath the night dews sweat.
> Even lust and envy sleep!

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakespeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder, is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lulled with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover; the other, that of a murderer.

> (2)————Wither'd murder,
> ————thus with his stealthy pace,
> With Tarquin's ravishing *sides* tow'rds his design,
> Moves like a ghost.——

This was the reading of this passage in all the editions before that of Mr. Pope, who for *sides*, inserted in the text *strides*, which Mr. Theobald has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might, perhaps, have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and

tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him; these he describes as *moving like ghosts*, whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be, as Milton expresses it,

Smooth sliding without step.

This hemistich will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus:

——and wither'd murder,
——thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin ravishing, *slides* tow'rds his design,
Moves like a ghost.

Tarquin is, in this place, the general name of a ravisher, and the sense is: Now is the time in which every one is asleep, but those who are employed in wickedness, the witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the ravisher, and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the *earth* may not *hear his steps.*

(3) And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.——

I believe every one that has attentively read this dreadful soliloquy is disappointed at the conclusion, which, if not wholly unintelligible, is at least obscure,

nor can be explained into any sense worthy of the author. I shall, therefore, propose a slight alteration,

——Thou sound and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And *talk*—The present horror of the time!——
That now suits with it.

Macbeth has, in the foregoing lines, disturbed his imagination by enumerating all the terrours of the night; at length he is wrought up to a degree of frenzy, that makes him afraid of some supernatural discovery of his design, and calls out to the stones not to betray him, not to declare where he walks, nor *to talk*.—As he is going to say of what, he discovers the absurdity of his suspicion, and pauses, but is again overwhelmed by his guilt, and concludes that such are the horrours of the present night, that the stones may be expected to cry out against him:

That now suits with it.

He observes in a subsequent passage, that on such occasions *stones have been known to move*. It is now a very just and strong picture of a man about to commit a deliberate murder, under the strongest convictions of the wickedness of his design.

NOTE XXI

SCENE IV

Len. The night has been unruly; where we lay
Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion, and confused events,
New-hatch'd to the woeful time.
The obscure bird clamour'd the live-long night:
Some say, the earth was fev'rous, and did shake.

These lines, I think, should be rather regulated thus:

———prophesying with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events.
New-hatch'd to th' woeful time, the obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night. Some say, the earth
Was fev'rous and did shake.

A *prophecy* of an *event new-hatch'd*, seems to be *a prophecy* of an *event past*. The term *new-hatch'd* is properly applicable to a *bird*, and that birds of ill omen should be *new-hatch'd to the woeful time* is very consistent with the rest of the prodigies here mentioned, and with the universal disorder into which nature is described as thrown, by the perpetration of this horrid murder.

NOTE XXII

——Up, up, and see
The great doom's image, Malcolm, Banquo,
As from your graves rise up.——

The second line might have been so easily completed, that it cannot be supposed to have been left imperfect by the author, who probably wrote,

——Malcolm! Banquo! rise!
As from your graves rise up.——

Many other emendations, of the same kind, might be made, without any greater deviation from the printed copies, than is found in each of them from the rest.

NOTE XXIII

Macbeth.——Here, lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murtherers
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore.

An *unmannerly dagger*, and a *dagger breech'd*, or as in some editions *breach'd with gore*, are expressions not easily to be understood, nor can it be imagined that Shakespeare would reproach the murderer of his king only with *want of manners*. There are, undoubtedly, two faults in this passage, which I have endeavoured to take away by reading,

——Daggers
Unmanly drench'd with gore.——

I saw drench'd *with the king's blood the fatal daggers, not only instruments of murder but evidences of* cowardice.

Each of these words might easily be confounded with that which I have substituted for it by a hand not exact, a casual blot, or a negligent inspection.

Mr. Pope has endeavoured to improve one of these lines, by substituting *goary blood* for *golden blood*, but it may easily be admitted, that he who could on such an occasion talk of *lacing the silver skin*, would *lace it* with *golden blood*. No amendment can be made to this line, of which every word is equally faulty, but by a general blot.

It is not improbable, that Shakespeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech, considered in this light, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antitheses and metaphors.

NOTE XXIV

ACT III. SCENE II

Macbeth.——Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he,
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
My genius is rebuk'd; (1) *as, it is said,*
Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 'tis so,
For Banquo's issue have I 'fil'd my mind;
For them, the gracious Duncan have I murther'd,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the (2) *common enemy of man,*
To make them kings,—the seed of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
(3) And champion me to th' *utterance!*——

(1)——As, it is said,
Anthony's was by Cæsar.

Though I would not often assume the critick's privilege, of being confident where certainty cannot be obtained, nor indulge myself too far, in departing from the established reading; yet I cannot but propose the rejection of this passage, which, I believe, was an insertion of some player, that, having so much learning as to discover to what Shakespeare alluded, was not willing that his audience should be less knowing than himself, and has, therefore, weakened the author's sense by the intrusion of a

remote and useless image into a speech bursting from a man wholly possessed with his own present condition, and, therefore, not at leisure to explain his own allusions to himself. If these words are taken away, by which not only the thought but the numbers are injured, the lines of Shakespeare close together without any traces of a breach.

My genius is rebuk'd. He chid the sisters.
(2)——The common enemy of man.

It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source, and, therefore, though the term *enemy of man*, applied to the devil, is in itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakespeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of the Destruction of Troy, a book which he is known to have read.

That this remark may not appear too trivial, I shall take occasion from it to point out a beautiful passage of Milton, evidently copied from a book of no greater authority: in describing the gates of hell, Book ii. v. 879, he says,

——On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.

In the history of Don Bellianis, when one of the knights approaches, as I remember, the castle of Brandezar, the gates are said to open, *grating harsh thunder upon their brazen hinges.*

(3)——Come fate into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance.——

This passage will be best explained by translating it into the language from whence the only word of difficulty in it is borrowed. *Que la destinée se rende en lice, et qu'elle me donne un défi* à l'outrance. A challenge or a combat *à l'outrance, to extremity*, was a fixed term in the law of arms, used when the combatants engaged with an *odium internecinum, an intention to destroy each other*, in opposition to trials of skill at festivals, or on other occasions, where the contest was only for reputation or a prize. The sense, therefore, is, Let fate, that has fore-doomed the exaltation of the sons of Banquo, enter the lists against me, with the utmost animosity, in defence of its own decrees, which I will endeavour to invalidate, whatever be the danger.

NOTE XXV

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue, ye go for men;
As hounds, and grey-hounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demy-wolves are cleped
All by the name of dogs.

Though this is not the most sparkling passage in the play, and though the name of a dog is of no great importance, yet it may not be improper to remark, that there is no such species of dogs as *shoughs* mentioned by Caius De Canibus Britannicis, or any other writer that has fallen into my hands, nor is the word to be found in any dictionary which I have examined. I, therefore, imagined that it is falsely printed for *slouths*, a kind of slow hound bred in the southern parts of England, but was informed by a lady, that it is more probably used, either by mis-

take, or according to the orthography of that time, for *shocks*.

NOTE XXVI

Macbeth.—— In this hour, at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace. ———

What is meant by *the spy of the time*, it will be found difficult to explain; and, therefore, sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration.—Macbeth is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find Banquo, and, therefore, says,

I will ———
Acquaint you with a perfect spy *o' th' time.*

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well instructed*, or *well informed*, as in this play,

Though in your state of honour I am *perfect.*

Though I am well acquainted *with your quality and rank.*

NOTE XXVII

SCENE IV

2 Murderer. He needs not to mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

Mr. Theobald has endeavoured unsuccessfully to amend this passage, in which nothing is faulty but the punctuation. The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this: The *perfect spy*, mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing scene, has, before they enter

upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement; and, therefore, one of the murderers observes, that, since *he has given them such exact information, he needs not doubt of their performance.* Then, by way of exhortation to his associates, he cries out,

——— To the direction just.

Now nothing remains but that we conform exactly to Macbeth's directions:

NOTE XXVIII

SCENE V

Macbeth. You know your own degrees, sit down:
At first and last, the hearty welcome.

As this passage stands, not only the numbers are very imperfect, but the sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading,

—— sit down at first,
And last a hearty welcome.

But for *last* should then be written *next.* I believe the true reading is,

You know your own degrees, sit down.—*To* first
And last the hearty welcome.

All of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received.

NOTE XXIX

Macbeth.—— There's blood upon thy face.
[*To the murderer, aside at the side door.*
Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without, than *he* within.

The sense apparently requires that this passage should be read thus:

'Tis better thee without, than *him* within.

That is, *I am more pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face, than in his body.*

NOTE XXX

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
[*Aside to Macbeth.*
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts,
Impostures to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

As *starts* can neither with propriety nor sense be called *impostures to true fear*, something else was undoubtedly intended by the author, who, perhaps, wrote,

———These flaws and starts,
Impostures true to fear, would well become
A woman's story.———

These symptoms of terrour and amazement might better become *impostors true* only *to fear, might become a coward at the recital of such falsehoods, as no man could credit, whose understanding was not weakened by his terrours; tales, told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam.*

NOTE XXXI

Macbeth.— Love and health to all!
Then I'll sit down: give me some wine, fill full: —

I drink to the general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.———

Though this passage is, as it now stands, capable of more meanings than one, none of them are very satisfactory; and, therefore, I am inclined to read it thus:

—— to all, and him, we thirst,
And hail to all.

Macbeth, being about to salute his company with a bumper, declares that he includes Banquo, though absent, in this act of kindness, and wishes *health* to all. *Hail* or *heil* for *health* was in such continual use among the good-fellows of ancient times, that a drinker was called a *was-heiler*, or a *wisher of health*, and the liquor was termed *was-heil*, because *health* was so often *wished* over it. Thus in the lines of Hanvil the monk,

Jamque vagante scypho, discincto gutture *was-heil*
Ingeminant *was-heil:* labor est plus perdere vini
Quam sitis.———

These words were afterwards corrupted into *wassail* and *wassailer*.

NOTE XXXII

Macbeth.—— Can such things be,
And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder ? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I *owe*,
When now I think, you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheek,
When mine is blanched with fear.

This passage, as it now stands, is unintelligible,

but may be restored to sense by a very slight alteration:

—— You make me strange
Ev'n to the disposition that I *know.*

Though I had before seen many instances of your courage, yet it now appears in a degree altogether new. *So that my long* acquaintance *with your* disposition *does not hinder me from that astonishment which* novelty *produces.*

NOTE XXXIII

It will have blood, they say, blood will have blood,
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
Augurs, that understand relations, have
By magpies, and by choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.———

In this passage the first line loses much of its force by the present punctuation. Macbeth having considered the prodigy which has just appeared, infers justly from it, that the death of Duncan cannot pass unpunished;

It will have blood: ———

then, after a short pause, declares it as the general observation of mankind, that murderers cannot escape:

—— they say, blood will have blood.

Murderers, when they have practised all human means of security, are detected by supernatural directions:

Augurs, that understand relations, &c.

By the word *relation* is understood the *connexion*

of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as *an augur*, is to know how those things *relate to* each other, which have no visible combination or dependence.

NOTE XXXIV

SCENE VII

Enter Lenox and another Lord.

As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakespeare's, is, perhaps, overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign a reason, why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not, with equal propriety, have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy, it was written, with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox and An.* for which the transcriber, instead of Lenox and Angus, set down, Lenox and *another Lord.* The author had, indeed, been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no errours of greater importance.

NOTE XXXV

ACT IV. SCENE I

As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper, in this place, to observe, with how much judgment Shakespeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions:

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The usual form in which familiar spirits are re-

ported to converse with witches, is that of a cat. A witch, who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakespeare, had a cat named Rutterkin, as the spirit of one of those witches was Grimalkin; and when any mischief was to be done, she used to bid Rutterkin *go and fly;* but once, when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a daughter of the countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying*, he only cried *mew*, from whence she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate:

> Though his bark cannot be lost,
> Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced, were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakespeare's witches:

> Weary sev'n nights, nine times nine,
> Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

It was, likewise, their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours, and the farmers have, to this day, many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakespeare has, accordingly, made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine;* and Dr. Harsenet observes, that, about that time, "a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charged with witchcraft."

> Toad, that under the cold stone,
> Days and nights hast thirty-one,

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

Toads have, likewise, long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessory to witchcraft, for which reason Shakespeare, in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits Padocke, or Toad, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was seized at Tholouse, there was found at his lodgings, "ingens bufo vitro inclusus," *a great toad shut in a vial*, upon which those that prosecuted him "veneficium exprobrabrant," *charged him*, I suppose, *with witchcraft*.

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake:
Eye of newt, and toe of frog; —
For a charm, &c.

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books De Viribus Animalium and De Mirabilibus Mundi, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab —

It has been already mentioned, in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom king James examined, and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It is observable, that Shakespeare, on this great occasion, which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the

circumstances of horrour. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

> And now about the cauldron sing ——
> Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and grey,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may.

And, in a former part:

> —— weird sisters hand in hand,——
> Thus do go about, about;
> Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
> And thrice again, to make up nine;

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shown, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilized natives of that country. "When any one gets a fall," says the informer of Camden, "he starts up, and, *turning three times to the right*, digs a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground, and if he falls sick in two or three days, they send one of their women that is skilled in that way to the place, where she says, I call thee from the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, the woods, the

rivers, and the fens, from the *fairies, red, black, white.*'' There was, likewise, a book written before the time of Shakespeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularized, in which Shakespeare has shown his judgment and his knowledge[v].

NOTE XXXVI

SCENE II

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
Thy crown does (1) sear mine eye-balls: —— and thy (2) *hair,*
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first: ——
A third is like the former.

(1) The expression of Macbeth, that the *crown sears* his eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity. Whence the Italian, *abacinare*, to *blind.*

(2) As Macbeth expected to see a train of kings, and was only inquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was *bound with gold*, like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and, therefore, said:

—— and thy *air,*
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

[v] Compare the Incantations of the Erichtho of Lucan, the Canidia of Horace, the Cantata of Salvator Rosa, "all' incanto all' incanto," and the Eumenides of Æschylus. The Gothic wildness of Shakespeare's "weird sisters" will thence be better appreciated. Ed.

NOTE XXXVII

I will — give to the edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That *trace him in his line.*— No boasting like a fool:
This deed I'll do before my purpose cool.

Both the sense and measure of the third line, which, as it rhymes, ought, according to the practice of this author, to be regular, are, at present, injured by two superfluous syllables, which may easily be removed by reading,

—— souls
That trace his line: — No boasting like a fool.

NOTE XXXVIII

SCENE III

Rosse. My dearest cousin,
I pray you, school yourself: But for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' time, I dare not speak much further,
But cruel are the times when we are traitors,
And do not know't ourselves, when we (1) *hold rumour*
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear;
But float upon a wild and violent sea,
Each way, and (2) *move*. I'll take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before: my pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

(1) ————When we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear.

The present reading seems to afford no sense; and, therefore, some critical experiments may be properly tried upon it, though, the verses being without any connexion, there is room for suspicion, that some intermediate lines are lost, and that the passage is, therefore, irretrievable. If it be supposed

that the fault arises only from the corruption of some words, and that the traces of the true reading are still to be found, the passage may be changed thus:

—— when we *bode ruin*
From what we fear, yet know not we fear.

Or, in a sense very applicable to the occasion of the conference:

——— when the *bold, running*
From what they fear, yet not what they fear.
(2) But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way, and move.

That he who *floats* upon a *rough sea* must move, is evident, too evident for Shakespeare so emphatically to assert. The line, therefore, is to be written thus:

Each way, and move — I'll take my leave of you.

Rosse is about to proceed, but, finding himself overpowered by his tenderness, breaks off abruptly, for which he makes a short apology, and retires.

NOTE XXXIX

SCENE IV

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,
Bestride our *downfal birth-doom:* each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllables of dolour.

He who can discover what is meant by him that earnestly exhorts him to *bestride* his *downfal birth-*

doom, is at liberty to adhere to the present text; but those who are willing to confess that such counsel would to them be unintelligible, must endeavour to discover some reading less obscure. It is probable that Shakespeare wrote:

——like good men,
Bestride our *downfall'n birthdom* ——

The allusion is to a man from whom something valuable is about to be taken by violence, and who, that he may defend it without encumbrance, lays it on the ground, and stands over it with his weapon in his hand. Our birthdom, or birthright, says he, lies on the ground, let us, like men who are to fight for what is dearest to them, not abandon it, but stand over it and defend it. This is a strong picture of obstinate resolution.

Birthdom for *birthright* is formed by the same analogy with *masterdom* in this play, signifying the *privileges* or *rights* of a *master*.

Perhaps it might be *birth-dame* for *mother;* let us stand over our mother that lies bleeding on the ground.

NOTE XL

Malcolm. Now we'll together; and the *chance of goodness*
Be like our warranted quarrel!

The *chance of goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important errour in the passage, it should, at least, be pointed thus:

——And the chance, of goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel!

That is, may the event be, of the goodness of heaven, [*pro justicia divina,*] answerable to the cause.

But I am inclined to believe that Shakespeare wrote,

—— and the chance, O goodness,
Be like our warranted quarrel!

This some of his transcribers wrote with a small *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading, the sense will be, *and O! thou sovereign goodness, to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause.*

NOTE XLI

ACT V. SCENE III

Macbeth. Bring me no reports, let them fly all,
Till Burnam would remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? ————
—— fly false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.

In the first line of this speech, the proper pauses are not observed in the present editions.

Bring me no more reports — let them fly all —

Tell me not any more of desertions — Let all my subjects leave me — I am safe till, &c.

The reproach of epicurism, on which Mr. Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective, uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury.

NOTE XLII

Macbeth. I have liv'd long enough: my *way* of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.

As there is no relation between the *way of life*,

and *fallen into the sear*, I am inclined to think, that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written, my *May* of life.

I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days, but I am without those comforts that should succeed the sprightliness of bloom, and support me in this melancholy season.

NOTE XLIII

SCENE IV

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is *advantage to be given*,
Both more and less have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

The impropriety of the expression *advantage to be given*, instead of *advantage given*, and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line incline me to read,

—— where there is *a 'vantage* to be *gone*,
Both more and less have given him the revolt.

Advantage or *'vantage*, in the time of Shakespeare, signified *opportunity*.

More and less is the same with *greater and less*. So in the interpolated Mandeville, a book of that age, there is a chapter of India the more and the less.

NOTE XLIV

SCENE V

Macbeth.—— Wherefore was that cry?
Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macbeth. She should (1) have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a *word*.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of (2) recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow.——

(1) She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for such a *word.*

This passage has very justly been suspected of being corrupt. It is not apparent for what *word* there would have been a *time*, and that there would or would not be a *time* for any *word*, seems not a consideration of importance sufficient to transport Macbeth into the following exclamation. I read, therefore:

She should have died hereafter,
There would have been a time for — such a *world!* —
To-morrow, &c.

It is a broken speech, in which only part of the thought is expressed, and may be paraphrased thus: The queen is dead. *Macbeth.* Her death should have been deferred to some more peaceful hour; had she lived longer, *there would at length have been a time for* the honours due to her as a queen, and that respect which I owe her for her fidelity and love. Such is the *world* — such is the condition of human life, that we always think *to-morrow* will be happier than to-day; but to-morrow and to-morrow steals over us unenjoyed and unregarded, and we still linger in the same expectation to the moment appointed for our end. All these days, which have thus passed away, have sent multitudes of fools to the grave, who were engrossed by the same dream of future felicity, and, when life was departing from them, were, like me, reckoning on to-morrow.

(2) To the last syllable of recorded time.

Recorded time seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of heaven for the period of life. The *record* of *futurity* is, indeed, no accurate expression, but as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

NOTE XLV

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.——
I *pull* in resolution; and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: "Fear not till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane," and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.

I *pull* in resolution.——

Though this is the reading of all the editions, yet as it is a phrase without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is surely better to read:

I *pall* in resolution.——

I languish in my constancy, my confidence begins to forsake me. It is scarcely necessary to observe how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer, or mistaken for it by an unskilful printer.

NOTE XLVI

SCENE VIII

Siward. Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon, by Camden, in his Remains, from which our author probably copied it.

When Siward, the martial Earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wound were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was answered in the forepart, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine."

After the foregoing pages were printed, the late edition of Shakespeare, ascribed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, fell into my hands; and it was, therefore, convenient for me to delay the publication of my remarks, till I had examined whether they were not anticipated by similar observations, or precluded by better. I, therefore, read over this tragedy, but found that the editor's apprehension is of a cast so different from mine, that he appears to find no difficulty in most of those passages which I have represented as unintelligible, and has, therefore, passed smoothly over them, without any attempt to alter or explain them.

Some of the lines with which I had been perplexed, have been, indeed, so fortunate as to attract his regard; and it is not without all the satisfaction which it is usual to express on such occasions, that I find an entire agreement between us in substituting [see Note II] *quarrel* for *quarry*, and in explaining the adage of the *cat*, [Note XVII.] But this

pleasure is, like most others, known only to be regretted; for I have the unhappiness to find no such conformity with regard to any other passage.

The line which I have endeavoured to amend, Note XI is, likewise, attempted by the new editor, and is, perhaps, the only passage in the play in which he has not submissively admitted the emendations of foregoing criticks. Instead of the common reading,

—— Doing every thing
Safe towards your love and honour,

he has published,

—— Doing every thing
Shap'd towards your love and honour.

This alteration, which, like all the rest attempted by him, the reader is expected to admit, without any reason alleged in its defence, is, in my opinion, more plausible than that of Mr. Theobald: whether it is right, I am not to determine.

In the passage which I have altered in Note XL an emendation is, likewise, attempted in the late edition, where, for,

—— and the chance *of* goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel,

is substituted—and the chance *in* goodness—whether with more or less elegance, dignity, and propriety, than the reading which I have offered, I must again decline the province of deciding.

Most of the other emendations which he has endeavoured, whether with good or bad fortune, are

too trivial to deserve mention. For surely the weapons of criticism ought not to be blunted against an editor, who can imagine that he is restoring poetry, while he is amusing himself with alterations like these: for,

—— This is the sergeant,
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought;

This is the sergeant, who
Like a *right* good and hardy soldier fought.

For,

—— Dismay'd not this
Our captains Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes;

—— Dismay'd not this
Our captains *brave* Macbeth and Banquo?—Yes.

Such harmless industry may, surely, be forgiven, if it cannot be praised: may he, therefore, never want a monosyllable, who can use it with such wonderful dexterity.

Rumpatur quisquis rumpitur invidia!

The rest of this edition I have not read, but, from the little that I have seen, think it not dangerous to declare that, in my opinion, its pomp recommends it more than its accuracy. There is no distinction made between the ancient reading, and the innovations of the editor; there is no reason given for any of the alterations which are made; the emendations of former criticks are adopted without any acknowledgment, and few of the difficulties are removed which have hitherto embarrassed the readers of Shakespeare.

I would not, however, be thought to insult the

editor, nor to censure him with too much petulance, for having failed in little things, of whom I have been told, that he excels in greater. But I may, without indecency, observe, that no man should attempt to teach others what he has never learned himself; and that those who, like Themistocles, have studied the arts of policy, and "can teach a small state how to grow great," should, like him, disdain to labour in trifles, and consider petty accomplishments as below their ambition[w].

[w] These excellent observations extorted praise from the supercilious Warburton himself. In the Preface to his Shakespeare, published two years after the appearance of Johnson's anonymous pamphlet, he thus alludes to it: "As to all those things which have been published under the titles of Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakespeare, (if you expect some critical notes on Macbeth, given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius,) the rest are absolutely below a serious notice." According to Boswell, Johnson ever retained a grateful remembrance of this distinguished compliment; "He praised me," said he, "at a time when praise was of value to me." Boswell, I.— Johnson affixed to this tract, proposals for a Shakespeare in 10 volumes, 18mo. price, to subscribers, 1*l.* 5*s.* in sheets, half-a-guinea of which moderate sum was to be deposited at the time of subscription. The following fuller proposals were published in 1756; but they were not realized until the lapse of nine years from that period. Boswell, I.— Ed.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING HIS DRAMATICK WORKS

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1756

WHEN the works of Shakespeare are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will, doubtless, be inquired, why Shakespeare stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the English writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply?

The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to Shakespeare. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books, indeed, are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them; but they are better secured from corruption than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

But of the works of Shakespeare the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten

the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre; and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press, in that age, will readily conceive.

It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate the text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care: no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously reunited; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands[x].

[x] It is not true, that the plays of this author were more incorrectly printed than those of any of his cotemporaries: for in the plays of Massinger, Marlowe, Marston, Fletcher, and others, as many errors may be found. It is not true, that the art of printing was in no other age in such unskilful hands. Nor is it true, in the latitude in which it is stated, that "these plays were printed from compilations made by chance or by stealth, out of the separate parts written for the theatre:" two only of all his dramas, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and King Henry V. appear to have been thus thrust into the world; and of the former it is yet a doubt, whether it is a first sketch, or an imperfect copy. See Malone's Preface throughout. Ed.

With the causes of corruption that make the revisal of Shakespeare's dramatick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of speech, and its cast of thought; which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. Shakespeare is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some, perhaps, have perished, and the rest are neglected. His imitations are, therefore, unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvass has decayed.

It is the great excellence of Shakespeare, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world, then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstition of the vulgar; which must, therefore, be traced, before he can be understood.

He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases

was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the Saxon was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is, therefore, embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsoleteness and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorised: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

If Shakespeare has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

These are the principal causes of the obscurity of Shakespeare; to which might be added the fulness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common,

though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those who read few other books of the same age. Addison, himself, has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as, perhaps, not to have named one of which Milton was the author; and Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which Milton was, indeed, the last that practised.

Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which Shakespeare followed his authors. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story, in the very book which Shakespeare consulted.

He that undertakes an edition of Shakespeare, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made: at least it will be necessary to collect and note the variation as materials for future criticks; for it very

often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again; and no single edition will supply the reader with a text, on which he can rely, as the best copy of the works of Shakespeare.

The edition now proposed will, at least, have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in the Oxford edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind, at different times; and, therefore, though, perhaps, many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the English, and so licentious as that of Shakes-

peare, emendatory criticism is always hazardous, nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

All the former criticks have been so much employed on the corrections of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by accident or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with their originals. If, in this part of his design, he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that, part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Pope were very ignorant of the ancient English literature; Dr. Warburton was detained by more important studies; and Mr. Theobald, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further inquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may, perhaps, claim some degree of confidence, having had more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man

from its first formation. He hopes that, by comparing the works of Shakespeare with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

When, therefore, any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connexion will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of Shakespeare himself.

The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of Shakespeare's editors have attempted, and some have neglected.—For this part of his task, and for this only, was Mr. Pope eminently and indisputably qualified; nor has Dr. Warburton[y] followed him with less diligence or less success. But I have never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of

[y] See how this respectful reference to his labours was rewarded by this "meek and modest ecclesiastic" in his Letters, 4to. 272, 273. Also Edinburgh Review for January, 1809.

judging for ourselves; teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment, by leaving them less to discover; and at last show the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will, probably, please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience, a deduction of conclusive arguments, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since, to conceive them, nothing more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must almost bring with him who would read Shakespeare.

But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

The notice of beauties and faults, thus limited, will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of some obscure passages.

The editor does not, however, intend to preclude himself from the comparison of Shakespeare's sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauties not obvious to the students of poetry; for, as he hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes, likewise, to procure him more rational approbation.

The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors: but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibiting whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the English drama.

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE

PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1768[z].

THAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all, perhaps, are more willing to honour past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance, and when he is dead we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative;

[z] Dr. Johnson's Preface first appeared in 1765. Malone's Shakespeare, i. 108. and Boswell's Life of Johnson, i.

to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As, among the works of nature, no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so, in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be, with certainty, determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The Pythagorean scale of numbers was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of Homer we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long sub-

sisted, arises, therefore, not from any credulous confidence in the superiour wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit[a]. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are, therefore, praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation

[a] Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos. Hor. Ep. II. 1. v. 39.

to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained, and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and, therefore, few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agi-

tated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual: in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this

author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned, by diligent selection, out of common conversation and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and, as it has no great influence upon the sum of life[b], it has little operation in

[b] With all respect for our great critic's memory we must maintain, that love has the *greatest* influence on the sum of life: and every popular tale or poem derives its main charm and power of pleasing from the incidents of this universal passion. Other passions have, undoubtedly, their sway, but love, when it does prevail, like Aaron's rod, swallows up every feeling beside. It is one thing to introduce the fulsome *badinage* of compliment with which French tragedy abounds, and another to exhibit the

> ——————"very ecstacy of love:
> Whose violent property foredoes itself,
> And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
> *As oft as any passion under heaven*,
> That does afflict our natures."—
>
> HAMLET. Act ii. Sc. i.

the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet, perhaps, no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say, with Pope, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristical; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: Shakespeare approximates

the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but, if it were possible, its effects would, probably, be such as he has assigned[c]; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This, therefore, is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstacies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his Romans not sufficiently Roman; and Voltaire centures his kings as not completely royal[d]. Dennis is offended, that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should

[c] Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, reperit tamen.
Facit illud verisimile, quod mendacium est.
PLAUTI PSEUDOLUS, Act i. Sc. 4.
Ficta voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris. HOR. ARS POET. 338.
See too the celebrated passage of Shakespeare himself — Midsummer-night's Dream, Act v. Sc. 1; and Idler, 84.— ED.

[d] The judgment of French poets on these points may be inferred from the tenour of Boileau's admonitions:

Gardez donc de donner, ainsi que dans Clélie,
L'air ni l'esprit françois à l'antique Italie;
Et, sous des noms romains faisant notre portrait,
Peindre Caton galant, et Brutus dameret.
Art Poétique, iii.— ED.

play the buffoon; and Voltaire, perhaps, thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeake always makes nature predominate over accident; and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and, wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer, not only odious, but despicable; he, therefore, added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not, in the rigorous or critical sense, either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at

the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolick of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrours of distress and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both[e].

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow, not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided

[e] The critic must, when he wrote this, have forgotten the Cyclops of Euripides, and also the fact, that when an Athenian dramatist brought out his *three* tragedies at the Dionysiac festival, he added, as a fourth, a sort of farce; a specimen of which Schlegel considers the Cyclops. Mr. Twining, in his amusing and instructive notes on Aristotle's Poetics, refers to the drunken jollity of Hercules in the Alcestis, and to the ludicrous dialogue between Ulysses and Minerva, in the first scene of the Ajax of Sophocles, as instances of Greek tragi-comedy. We may add the Electra of Euripides; for if the poet did not intend to burlesque the rules of tragic composition in many of the scenes of that play, and to make his audience laugh, he calculated on more dull gravity in Athens, than we are accustomed to give that city of song the credit for. The broad ridicule which Aristophanes casts against the tragedians is not half so laughable.

between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants, at last, the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who, in daily experience, feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy may be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered, likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and

that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who, in their edition, divided our author's works into comedies, histories and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion, constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow[f].

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent of each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra, than in the history of

[f] Thus, says Downes the Prompter, p. 22: "The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet was made some time after [1662] into a tragi-comedy, by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the tragedy was revived again, 'twas played alternately, tragical one day, and tragi-comical another, for several days together. STEEVENS.

Richard the second. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of Hamlet is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the Gravediggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he, therefore, indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to

comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comick scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy, for the greater part, by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct[g].

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and, therefore, durable; the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dis-

[g] This opinion is controverted, and its effects deplored, by Dr. J. Warton, in a note to Malone's Shakespeare, i. p. 71.— Ed.

solved by the chance that combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes, without injury, by the adamant of Shakespeare[h].

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is, therefore, more agreeable to the ears

[h] Dr. Drake conceives that Dr. Wolcot was indebted to the above noble passage for the *prima stamina* of the following stanza:

> Thus, while I wond'ring pause o'er Shakespeare's page
> I mark, in visions of delight, the sage
> High o'er the wrecks of man who stands sublime,
> A column in the melancholy waste,
> (Its cities humbled, and its glories past,)
> Majestic 'mid the solitude of time.— Ed.

of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

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